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3rd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability: 5-6 September 2024

Modern society’s reliance on chemicals makes their production one of the major and most globalized sectors of the global economy. However, the essential economic role of chemicals and their contribution to improved living standards must be balanced with the recognition of potential costs: heavy use of water and energy in their manufacture and the adverse impacts of chemicals on the environment and human health. The diversity and severity of such impacts make sound chemicals management a key cross-cutting issue for sustainable development.

The international community first sought to address this challenge by creating the voluntary multi-sector, multi-stakeholder Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in 2006, governed by a periodic International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM). At ICCM5 in September 2023, a Global Framework on Chemicals: For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste (GFC) was created as a comprehensive and more ambitious successor to SAICM.

The 3rd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability, co-hosted by the German Government and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), convened on the theme “Implementing the Global Framework on Chemicals” to take stock of progress in implementing the Framework, showcase initiatives already underway, share experiences in chemical and waste management, and catalyze further action and partnerships.

The Forum was organized around thematic sessions focusing on:

- Fostering commitment in key sectors that play an important role in achieving change;
- Creating links to and engaging with other sustainable development fora;
- Strengthening legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and capacities;
- Transforming product value and supply chains; and
- Identifying and scaling up innovative financing.

To set the scene for the Forum’s discussions, representatives of six of the 10 Participating Organizations of the IOMC discussed their respective and collective experiences in driving GFC implementation, including working with stakeholders to develop implementation programmes called for by ICCM5. Participants

also heard from ministerial representatives from Germany about its effort to green supply chains and from other countries, including Egypt, Nigeria, Viet Nam, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, the Philippines, the UK, Chile, Mexico, and India, about national initiatives to improve chemicals management. These included mainstreaming the sound management of pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls in diverse sectors, tightening regulation based on national chemicals databases, and improving training to prevent chemicals-related accidents.

Barriers to GFC implementation were also identified, including capacity building and finance. In light of this, the Forum considered how to strengthen innovative financing to implement the GFC, with representatives of multilateral

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development banks, funds, and private sector institutional investors discussing instruments that can be used to shift financial flows towards sustainable chemistry, including improved use of grants and blended financing. Several key messages emerged from the Forum's discussions, including the need for enhanced partnerships all along the chemicals value chain, from industry to government, and with the financial sector. The multi-stakeholder nature of the GFC was identified as critically important and the Berlin Forum was viewed as a way to bring together relevant stakeholders. Through interactive polls conducted throughout the two days of the Forum, participants identified key sectors that intersect with the chemicals industry and recognized the importance of chemicals management for all sectors of society, including health, agriculture, and children's wellbeing.

Echoing sentiments expressed at the start of the Forum by Germany's Environment Minister, Steffi Lemke, the meeting concluded with strong calls by representatives of the host country, the GFC Secretariat, and IOMC members, to continue to build on the energy and goodwill demonstrated at ICCM5 and related multilateral negotiations such as the imminent plastics treaty, by putting all hands on deck to turn the intent of the GFC into concrete actions.

The 3rd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability took place virtually from 5-6 September 2024.

A Brief History of the Berlin Forum

The Berlin Forum was created by the German Government in 2021 to provide momentum to high-level international dialogue on the urgent challenges and opportunities in relation to the sound management of chemicals and waste and their contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

First Berlin Forum: The first Forum took place in a virtual format from 7-8 July 2021. Hosted by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), it convened under the theme "Ambition and Action towards 2030" and provided an opportunity for government representatives and stakeholders to exchange views on potential outcomes for ICCM5. The Forum consisted of a Ministerial Dialogue and a Stakeholder Dialogue. About 50 high-level speakers, including UN Secretary-General António Guterres, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Virginijus Sinkevičius, EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, contributed to the Ministerial Dialogue. During the Stakeholder Dialogue, there was significant support for the establishment of a science-policy interface on chemicals and waste.

Second Berlin Forum: The second Forum was held from 4-5 September 2023 also in a virtual format. Convening under the theme "Just Transition Towards a Pollution-Free Planet," the meeting aimed to foster a shared understanding of key international issues and priorities regarding chemicals and waste management, and to explore possible solutions. The Forum featured four interactive multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral dialogues on: food security; human health and the environment;

labor and occupational health; and innovation for a just transition. Taking place just ahead of ICCM5, which adopted the GFC, it provided a space for gathering diverse inputs from stakeholders with the aim of ensuring an ambitious outcome from the Conference.

Report of the Forum

Welcome and Opening

On Thursday, 5 September, Co-Moderators Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariat, and Minu Hemmati, consultant, BMUV, Germany, opened the Forum. Underlining the meeting's focus on "Implementing the Global Framework on Chemicals" and its theme "For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste," the Co-Moderators encouraged participants to share their views through a series of interactive polls to be conducted during the Forum.

Opening Speech: Steffi Lemke, Federal Minister, BMUV, Germany, described the Forum as an opportunity to take stock of GFC implementation, learn about chemicals initiatives launched since the adoption of the GFC, and share experiences to improve the management of dangerous chemicals. She cited her country's strong start in GFC implementation, including adopting new rules to improve the exchange of chemicals information along the supply chain, and contributing EUR 20 million to the GFC Fund.

Keynote Speech: Axel van Trotsenburg, Senior Managing Director, World Bank Group, underlined that the unchecked use of chemicals, material waste, and chemical pollution are defining challenges of our time. He outlined some of his organization's activities on chemicals management, including promoting circular economy approaches, as well as helping governments assess their needs and develop the relevant legal frameworks and capacity to sustainably manage chemicals. Van Trotsenburg emphasized the role of the private sector, especially the chemical industry, in providing safer chemicals, stressing the importance of prevention, as "cleaning up later is expensive for our wallets, health, and the planet."

Setting the Scene

Co-Moderator Payet invited the IOMC Chair and the heads of three IOMC Participating Organizations to discuss



Steffi Lemke, Federal Minister, BMUV, Germany



Johannes Heister, Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank, and IOMC Chair

their respective, as well as collective, experiences in driving implementation of the GFC.

Johannes Heister, Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank, and IOMC Chair, pointed to the participation of so many IOMC Participating Organizations in this panel as an example of their readiness to bring their collective strengths to bear to advance their common objectives. He highlighted some of their collaborative initiatives, including: development of an online toolkit to support country actions; continuing work on the GFC's measurability framework, emerging policy issues, and issues of concern; support for countries to develop proposals to access GFC funding; and consultations with stakeholders to develop implementation programmes.

Presenting preliminary results from a recent survey of industry stakeholders, Heister said 70% of respondents are familiar with the GFC and nearly 90% are interested in participating in the development of an industry implementation programme. Heister concluded by expressing the IOMC's readiness to explore options for a support structure for these initiatives, noting examples exist of multi-stakeholder, multi-sector, and multi-level coalitions that coordinate their work with formal international processes. He also expressed his support for maintaining the Berlin Forum as an "eminent meeting space" for all concerned with ridding the planet of harmful chemicals and waste.

In the first of three statements by IOMC Participating Organizations, Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), thanked Germany and other major contributors to the GFC Fund, saying capitalization had reached USD 27 million and the first call for applications would open in October 2024. As host of the GFC Secretariat and Fund, she underlined UNEP's commitment to "unleashing the full power of this agreement," citing: ongoing work on the measurability framework; design innovations for safer and sustainable products; country capacity building in high impact sectors, such as textiles, electronics, mining, and agriculture; and sharing good practices from ongoing work across diverse multilateral environmental agreements.

Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme (UNDP), proposed framing the discussions around three core

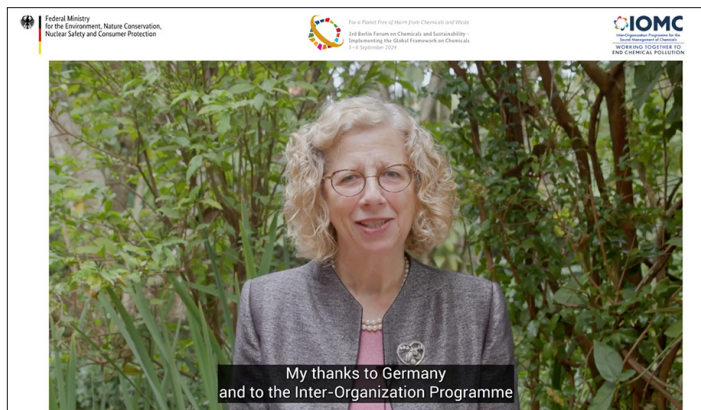
questions: how to drive the necessary "systemic shifts" towards a green, circular, and more regenerative economy; how to work across sectors to mainstream chemicals and waste priorities into national planning processes; and how to better leverage finance to drive these shifts. He listed some concrete examples of how UNDP is working with IOMC partners "to drive real change," including its support for chemicals and waste management programmes in 80 countries, enabling 24 countries to eliminate harmful PCBs, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management project to combat agrochemical pollution in eight countries.

Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General, International Labour Organization, stressed that more than one million workers lose their lives each year due to the unsafe handling of chemicals and waste. He welcomed the collaborative spirit that enabled adoption of the GFC and noted the need for enhanced technical support at the national and workplace levels to achieve Target D7 of the Framework, which aims to achieve the safe use of chemicals along the entire supply chain.

IOMC Panel: A panel discussion with three more IOMC member organizations ensued, offering additional perspectives on the importance of fostering multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration in GFC implementation. In an introductory round, Nikhil Seth, Executive Director, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), described the GFC as an excellent collaboration framework and urged all stakeholders to make full use of their strengths and mandates to ensure the energy of ICCM5 does not dissipate. He called for a systems approach when integrating the GFC into national and global frameworks, and "keeping abreast of what science is telling us" on, notably, health and microplastics.

Fabrizia Lapecorella, Deputy Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), discussed her organization's work on standardized tools and methodologies related to chemicals, which could be applied to enhance monitoring of the GFC and facilitate the sharing of information to a broader public.

Ciyong Zou, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director, Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), said UNIDO's programmes seek to boost sustainable industrialization by targeting hazardous chemicals across the



Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director

entire supply chain. He highlighted an ongoing global electronics management programme involving 16 countries, green chemistry innovations in the business sector, and support for a national roadmap to reduce the use of mercury in Brazil's cement industry.

In a follow-up round focusing on how to bridge capacity gaps and leave no one behind, Lapecorella stressed the need to support comprehensive national programmes, citing OECD's work to combat illegal trade of chemicals and waste in Africa. Seth emphasized that capacity building "is not a one-off event" and solutions developed elsewhere cannot simply be juxtaposed in different settings. He called for long-term capacity-building approaches that address specific needs at the local level in full partnership with national partners. Stressing that limited technical, financial, and human capacities deter GFC implementation, Zou called for focusing on the overall enabling environment to provide incentives for all players to change their behavior, highlighting UNIDO's expertise in partnering with industry to understand their long-term needs.

Session 1: Creating Linkages and Engaging with Other Sustainable Development Fora to Enhance GFC Implementation

Opening Statements: This session took place on Thursday, 5 September. In a keynote address, Karl Lauterbach, Federal Minister of Health, Germany, underscored the central role of the health sector in shaping GFC implementation. He suggested that the World Health Organization's (WHO) Chemicals Road Map is an excellent basis for translating the GFC into action. Lauterbach also called for the WHO to play an active role, on equal footing with UNEP, in the proposed science-policy panel on chemicals and waste (SPP).

Yutaka Matsuzawa, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Japan, said it is time to advance GFC implementation, particularly work on transforming value chains. He described Japan's efforts to implement the GFC, including integrating it into its national environment plan in May 2024, and initiating a national policy dialogue, with participation of all stakeholders, to develop a national implementation plan.

Bernice Swarts, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, South Africa, said her country has begun



Bernice Swarts, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, South Africa

preparations for GFC implementation. Noting that lack of capacity is a key challenge, she called on developed countries and global financial institutions, including the GEF, to fund capacity building on chemicals and waste management and to provide technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.

Camila Zepeda, Director General for Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, emphasized the need for full implementation of the ICCM5 resolution on gender, including the gender action plan. She also highlighted the [Gender & Chemicals Partnership](#) launched at ICCM5.

Agnieszka Dudra, Director, Bureau for Chemical Substances, Poland, stressed the need to address synergies and interlinkages between the sound management of chemicals and waste with other aspects that are vital to tackling the triple planetary crisis. Noting that not much time remains before 2030, she called for advancing GFC work on measurability and indicators.

Rachel Irving, Deputy Director, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK, noted her country has committed GBP 500,000 to the GFC Fund, and emphasized the need to stay conscious of linkages with the Global Biodiversity Framework and the SDGs. Irving called for constructive engagement in the SPP negotiations, which she suggested would significantly assist GFC implementation.

Sherika Whitelocke-Ballingsingh, Poison Information Coordinator, Caribbean Poison Information Network, underscored the importance of engaging all GFC stakeholders across the lifecycle. She called for partnerships that will lead to robust legal frameworks, comprehensive guidelines, reduced exposure to chemicals, and the generation of valid and reliable data on chemicals.

Noura Hamladji, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said this Forum's dialogue on GFC implementation plays an essential role in scaling up action including action to address global climate change. She encouraged stakeholders to work with UNFCCC Parties to consider chemicals management issues. Hamladji emphasized the need to finance green solutions within the chemical industry, saying that fostering a green transition "is an investment we cannot miss."

Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),



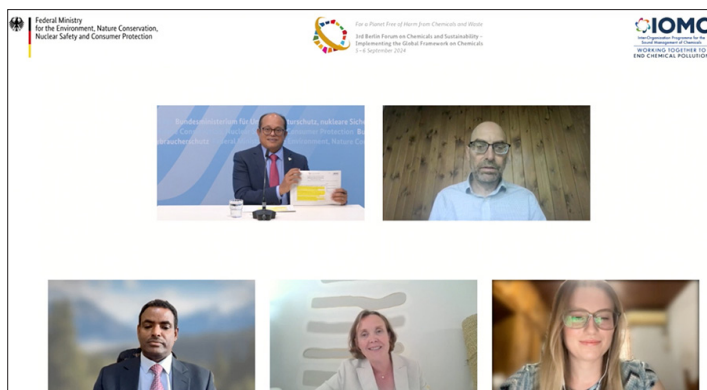
Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

said the GFC is not only a policy document, but also a call to action. She stressed education as a cornerstone of sustainable development, as called for in the 2021 Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development.

Panel Discussion: Kerstin Stendahl, Special Envoy on Climate and Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, discussed ways to effectively address potential trade-offs in dealing with the triple planetary crisis. She noted, for instance, that while renewable energy sources are key for the energy transition, their production, use, and decommissioning involve chemicals, many of which are highly hazardous. Stendahl emphasized the need to factor in circularity and the sound management of chemicals and waste in countries' Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, as well as in the scoping of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's assessment reports.

Tadesse Amera, Executive Director, Pesticide Action Network (PAN)-Ethiopia and Co-Coordinator, PAN-International, discussed the role of grassroots and community-based organizations in implementing the GFC. He highlighted experiences with implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), noting the role of community-based organizations in implementing emerging policy issues and affirming a similar role for GFC implementation. Amera noted the organizations' participation was enabled by SAICM's multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach, which has also been adopted by the GFC.

Shannon Lisa, Global Focal Point, Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform, discussed the Platform's efforts to ensure youth participation in the chemical pollution space, including providing travel grants to over 70 young people to participate in chemicals-related negotiations. She highlighted that the Platform hosted the first Youth Forum on Chemicals and Waste as a special event of ICCM5, noting the Forum will now continue as a permanent avenue for amplifying youth priorities and actions on chemicals management. Lisa also drew attention to the rollout of a new initiative on a zero-waste policy pitch, which is a competition for youth to identify a waste management issue in their community and design a proposal to address it.



Panel discussion (clockwise from left): Co-Moderator **Rolph Payet**, BRS Conventions Executive Secretary; **Joel Tickner**, Professor of Public Health, University of Massachusetts, and Executive Director, Change Chemistry; **Shannon Lisa**, Global Focal Point, Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform; **Kerstin Stendahl**, Special Envoy on Climate and Environment, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and **Tadesse Amera**, PAN-Ethiopia Executive Director

Joel Tickner, Executive Director, Change Chemistry, lamented that although the chemical industry is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, the climate movement considers chemical pollution an issue to be addressed after, rather than alongside, climate change. He stressed the need to both de-fossilize and detoxify chemistry through a holistic approach of changing not only the chemical industry's energy sources, but also its feedstocks, molecules, processes, and products. He called for scaling sustainable chemistry investment to meet both climate and chemical pollution goals.

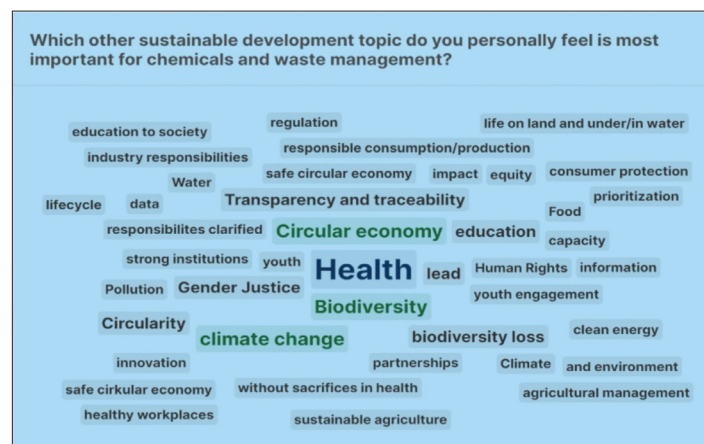
Closing Remarks: Miriam Diamond, GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), outlined some of the barriers to GFC implementation, including lack of consistent financing and prioritization of economic development over protection of human and environmental health. She called for learning from science, and stressed that scientific knowledge, including Indigenous knowledge, rather than ideology or competing narrow interests, must drive change. Diamond urged translating ambitions into reality through partnerships and thinking creatively about how to achieve a just transition.

Interactive Poll: In the first of a series of polls, participants were asked to identify what sustainable development topics they consider as most important for chemicals and waste management. Presenting the results, Co-Moderator Hemmati said a wide variety of topics were identified, including: health and health-related issues; justice and related issues such as gender justice and human rights; economy-related issues such as circular economy; and sustainable agriculture and food. She underlined that the large number and comprehensiveness of the topics identified points to the fact that chemicals and waste management is important for achieving all the SDGs.

Session 2: Strengthening Legal Frameworks, Institutional Mechanisms and Capacities

Introducing the session on Thursday, 5 September, Co-Moderator Payet said the discussions would take a critical look at why progress has been lacking and how to inject fresh thinking to address these gaps.

Andrew Raine, Deputy Director, Environmental Law Division, UNEP, discussed the GFC's positioning within the overall global landscape of multilateral environmental agreements, noting that



Participants' responses to the first poll displayed during the session



Andrew Raine, Deputy Director, Environmental Law Division, UNEP

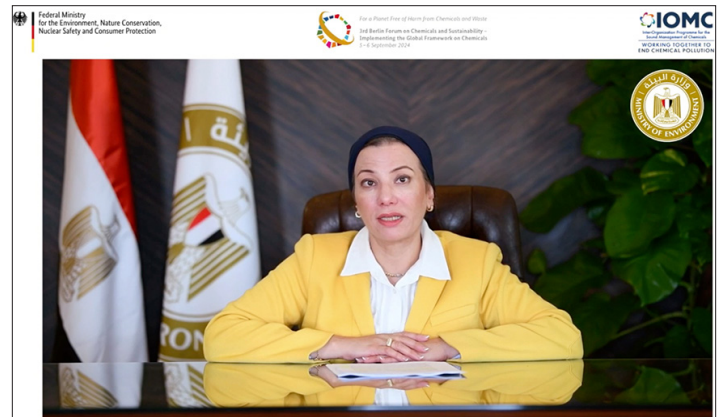
the seven targets under Strategic Objective A of the Framework task countries with developing the requisite legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and capacities to achieve the safe and sustainable management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle. Noting significant capacity gaps at the national level to handle the complexity of chemicals management, including the growing demand for transparency in chemical safety information and labelling, he highlighted a new UNEP programme on “reimagining and strengthening environmental governance” that includes support for:

- identifying good practices and opportunities to support countries in achieving Strategic Objective A;
- developing a menu of policy and regulatory options and associated model law provisions for countries to adapt to their unique circumstances; and
- exploring regulatory innovations to streamline effective chemicals governance, such as the mutual acceptance of data, methodologies, and risk management approaches

Le Viet Thang, Deputy Chief of Administration, Vietnam Chemicals Agency, said that while the country’s chemicals sector is an important contributor to economic growth, the government has strengthened the country’s legal framework to address limitations such as weak regulation of businesses that handle hazardous chemicals and insufficient capacities at the local level. Among priority GFC actions, he noted efforts to strengthen green chemistry and lifecycle approaches, tighten regulation through a national chemicals database, and improve training to prevent chemicals-related accidents.

Statements: Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Egypt, stressed that with advancing industrialization, safe management of hazardous chemicals and waste is imperative. Among new national initiatives, she outlined a process to ensure the mainstreaming of pesticides and PCB management in diverse sectors, saying it requires close coordination between the environment ministry and relevant line ministries. Highlighting the adoption of the first waste management law in 2020, Fouad further noted the need to update relevant legal frameworks and ensure better integration of the private sector as an integral stakeholder in coordinating national actions.

Iziah Adekunle Salako, Minister of State for Environment, Nigeria, outlined ongoing efforts to establish and consolidate



Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Egypt

chemicals management frameworks under the coordination of a newly established National Committee on Chemicals Management. Among milestones, he noted the development of a draft chemicals and waste coordination bill to address identified gaps, and ongoing work to develop roadmaps towards the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). On remaining gaps, he noted limited financing and technical capacities, weak implementation of global agreements, and lack of data systems to track hazardous waste movements and assess the effectiveness of actions taken.

Mike Elton Mposha, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Zambia, said his country has mainstreamed environmental sustainability within its national development plan, and incorporated relevant international agreements on chemicals management within its legal framework. Among key initiatives, he noted efforts to phase out highly hazardous pesticides, improvements to national chemicals registers to ensure adherence to international standards, and enactment of an extended producer responsibility instrument banning the manufacture and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags.

Katrin Schneeberger, Director of the Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, underscored the need to make full use of the global governance “toolbox” that includes relevant multilateral environmental agreements and expertise of key intergovernmental organizations. She encouraged all stakeholders to build on the work of the Geneva-based chemicals and waste cluster, as an important source of knowledge, support, and collaboration. She further expressed support for establishing the SPP to move from reactive to proactive solutions and foster a shift towards safe alternatives and a circular economy.

Hartwig Wendt, Global Head of Corporate Product Stewardship, Bayer, said industry actors are fully aligned on the need to remove or reduce the global transport of waste streams, which includes the handling of dangerous goods that are often an integral part of such waste. Of the estimated 400 million tons of plastics produced each year, he noted that around half are non-recyclable, while fewer than 10% are recycled. He urged greater attention to chemical recycling as an alternative approach for the removal of substances of concern, noting it can help reduce carbon emissions linked to waste incineration. On the role of industry, Wendt highlighted the need to support training

for workers and smallholder farmers that handle dangerous chemicals and waste.

Panel Discussion: Greg Carreau, Director-General, Safe Environments Directorate, Health Canada, underscored the critical role of health ministries in identifying health risks from chemicals and communicating them to citizens. He emphasized the importance of the WHO Chemicals Road Map and the Global Chemicals and Health Network mandated in the Road Map. Carreau noted the Road Map is being updated in light of the adoption of the GFC.

Sylvie Lemoine, Deputy Director General and Executive Director, Industrial Policy, European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic), on behalf of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), said capacity building is a GFC foundational pillar. She stressed that each country must determine its priority needs and a roadmap to address them, suggesting they start with national inventories, implementation of the GHS, and mechanisms to implement relevant international conventions on chemicals and waste. Lemoine announced a doubling of industry support for the GFC, increasing the contribution to EUR 1 million in 2024.

Liam O'Brien, Assistant Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions, stressed the GFC provides the foundation for a rights-based approach to chemicals and waste management. He highlighted the right to be represented and consulted at work that has real agency to change workplace conditions, the right to negotiate occupational exposure limits, and the right to cease unsafe work.

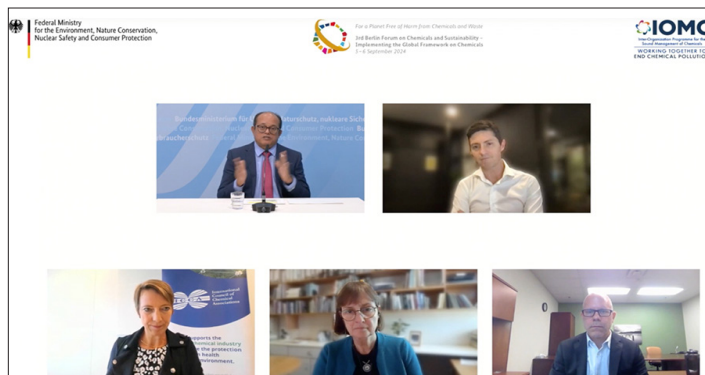
Hanna-Andrea Rother, Head of the Environmental Health Division and Associate Professor, University of Cape Town, South Africa, focused on the important role that the SPP could play in enhancing the knowledge base of policymakers by identifying options for chemical exposure prevention. She called for the SPP to focus on delivering the latest science without conflict of interest to promote quick, implementable, and cost-effective solutions to protect health from chemicals and waste.

María Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO, summarized the session by noting emphasis on:

- the importance of capacity building;
- the right to health and implementation of the WHO Chemicals Road Map;



María Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO



Panel discussion (clockwise from left): Co-Moderator **Rolph Payet**, BRS Conventions Executive Secretary; **Liam O'Brien**, Australian Council of Free Trade Unions; **Greg Carreau**, Director General, Safe Environments Directorate, Health Canada; **Hanna-Andrea Rother**, Professor and Head of Division of Environmental Health, School of Public Health, University of Cape Town, South Africa; and **Sylvie Lemoine**, Deputy Director General, Cefic

- increased financial support from industry for GFC implementation;
- the need to exchange practices and lessons learned on the sound management of chemicals and waste; and
- the need for chemicals and waste management within the context of green growth.

Interactive Poll: Co-Moderator Hemmati presented the results of the poll asking which of five suggested actions are needed to achieve GFC Strategic Objective A, which calls for countries to establish legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and capacities for the safe and sustainable management of chemicals. She noted strong support among respondents for all five: multi-sectoral collaboration (60%); financial support (58%); engaging relevant stakeholders (58%); raising awareness among political leaders and parliamentarians (56%); and sharing best practices (40%).

Closing of Day 1

Offering closing reflections for the first day, Iftikhar-ul-Hassan Shah Gilani, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environment Coordination, Pakistan, and GFC Bureau President, underscored that robust funding of capacity building and technical assistance, particularly to developing countries, is a key pillar for successful GFC implementation. He also stressed collaboration and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements already working on chemicals and waste, particularly the BRS and Minamata Conventions. Declaring the GFC a groundbreaking model for achieving the SDGs, Iftikhar Gilani emphasized the importance of engaging all sectors and stakeholders in its implementation. He cautioned that “our journey has just started” and all need to work collaboratively to achieve the Framework’s goals.

Day 2: Welcome and Opening

Opening the Forum on Friday, 6 September, Co-Moderator Payet underlined the Day’s focus on implementation, particularly transforming product value and supply chains, and the financing landscape for chemicals and waste management.



Anita Breyer, President, ICCM5

Opening Remarks: Anita Breyer, President, ICCM5, noted she had viewed the Forum as an opportunity to remind everyone of the GFC's to-do list, but expressed her pleasure that the Forum's opening day showed so much work is already underway. She encouraged participants to further reflect on how to achieve needed changes along the entire chemicals value chain, underlining that the upstream and downstream sectors must work together for safer products for a planet free from harm.

Session 3: Transforming Product Value and Supply Chains: Taking Stock of and Scaling Up Sustainable Solutions by Industry and Other Stakeholders

Opening Statements: In the first of two keynote addresses, Anne-Sofie Bäckar, Executive Director, ChemSec, described her organization's work to engage with the chemicals and downstream industry as well as institutional investors, including through publishing a list of chemicals that may be regulated and outlining what action the industry can take in response. She observed that "anticipation of regulation drives innovation." Welcoming GFC Target A1 on the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of legal frameworks and institutions to prevent adverse effects from chemicals and waste, Bäckar also highlighted the need for strict key performance indicators (KPIs).

In his keynote, Mark Rossi, Executive Director, Clean Production Action, discussed possible KPIs for downstream sectors, including:

- corporate chemicals policies that address the need to reduce chemical footprints and grow safer solutions;
- chemical footprint reductions, including setting goals and tracking progress to goals;
- safer solutions such as ecolabel-certified agricultural products, and safer chemicals; and
- transparency and reporting progress in reducing chemical footprints and growing safer solutions.

Martin Kayser, Senior Vice President, BASF, noted strong support for the GFC within the chemicals industry, stating that industry players recognize the role of the Framework in facilitating a shared understanding of sustainability among multiple stakeholders. Listing some examples of BASF actions, he highlighted: contributing to an ICCA-led initiative to develop a comprehensive database of plastic additives in commerce to

facilitate transparency and robust risk assessments; participating in the global [Alliance to End Plastic Waste](#); and implementing a comprehensive Sustainable Solutions Steering approach within its own value chains.

Ismahane Remonnay, Global Head of Prospective and Partnerships, Veolia, discussed her company's sustainability policies, including a requirement that subsidiaries prioritize worker protection even in the absence of government regulations. She outlined efforts to, among others: develop a chemical footprint; forge alliances with diverse stakeholders; practice circularity across Veolia's operations; and engage young chemists. She underscored the need for a strong global chemicals framework, on par with the Paris Agreement on climate change, to bring clarity to the private sector and drive investments in "the right chemistry."

Susan Wilburn, Senior Sustainability Consultant, addressed the chemicals-environment-health nexus, noting, in particular, the impacts of exposure to disinfectants and other hazardous chemicals for a predominantly female health workforce. She said this calls for intersectional approaches to chemicals management that demonstrate the multiple benefits of pursuing safer alternatives.

Melissa Nguyen, Vizient, stressed the urgent need to address the health impacts of chemicals and waste disposal, and recycling at the local level. She highlighted her company's work to reduce harmful chemicals in protective clothing and other medical products, saying this includes collaborating with suppliers to gather data on the company's environmental footprint.

Lydia Lin, Regions Director, ZDHC Foundation, said the multi-stakeholder initiative currently brings together 358 member organizations, predominantly in the textiles sector, with a shared objective of eliminating harmful chemicals from global supply chains. She noted the network has aligned its global roadmap to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the GFC and maintains a list of safe chemicals on its online platform, amongst other tools and guidance to demonstrate scalable impact.

Panel Discussion: Introducing this segment, Co-Moderator Payet invited panelists to share how their respective industry alliances are driving the adoption of safer alternatives and sustainable solutions across complex global supply chains.

Tyler Gillard, Chief Strategy Officer, Responsible Business Alliance (RBA), said business plays an important multiplier



Martin Kayser, Senior Vice President, BASF



Panel discussion (clockwise from left): Co-Moderator **Rolph Payet**, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions; **Therese Lilliebladh**, Chemicals Leader, IKEA; **Harold Pauwels**, Director, Standards, Global Reporting Initiative; and **Tyler Gillard**, Chief Strategy Officer, Responsible Business Alliance

role by translating international norms and standards into industry specific guidelines. Noting that RBA's membership is predominantly drawn from chemicals-heavy electronic and automotive sectors, he highlighted the benefits of collective actions by members, which include collective capacity building, information sharing, and remediation activities. He also announced that RBA is initiating work on a GFC Implementation Programme addressing the electronics industry.

Harold Pauwels, Director Standards, Global Reporting Initiative, discussed the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches to designing sustainability standards, highlighting a joint initiative with the Sustainable Accounting Standards Board to develop joint indicators and monitoring methodologies that include chemicals management considerations. He stressed the value that such approaches have for enhancing broader transparency and trust and mitigating negative social and environmental impacts.

Therese Lilliebladh, Chemicals Leader, IKEA, underscored the importance of good communication in driving change across the entire value chain. Among other steps, she said the company sends clear signals about its long-term direction to suppliers and is working to communicate its sustainability efforts more effectively with consumers.

Closing Remarks: Marco Mensink, Director-General, Cefic, said that as incoming President, the ICCA would drive further alignment of industry actors to advance sustainable chemicals management. Among concrete examples, he highlighted the ICCA's EUR 1 million contribution to the GFC Fund, the launch of its capacity-building programme in 16 African countries, and broadening governance oversight to plastics producers, as well as cosmetics and other fast-moving brands. He said adoption of the European Union Green Deal has created an opportunity to enhance self-regulation and make a strong business case for investing in higher sustainability standards.

Jorge Ocaña, Manager Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, UNITAR, offered some takeaway messages from the discussions. He noted the focus on industry-related GFC targets, especially Target D6 on the development of sustainable chemicals and waste strategies in economic and industry sectors.

He further highlighted the recognition by many industry players that work on issues of concern and other emerging issues offers an opportunity for exploring more sustainable business practices among both upstream and downstream sectors. He concluded by inviting all stakeholders to seize this opportunity to drive greater collaboration on GFC implementation programmes that are currently under development, and explore ideas for vehicles or a coalition to support those programmes.

Interactive Poll: Co-Moderator Hemmati presented the results of a poll that asked respondents to suggest one concrete step the GFC could take to attract and engage different economic and industry sectors. Noting that incentives and workshops received the most support, she said this implies, among other things, "speaking their language," reaching our more proactively, and co-creating the work together. Reacting to the results, Co-Moderator Payet quipped that the intention should be to hold "workshops and not talk shops."

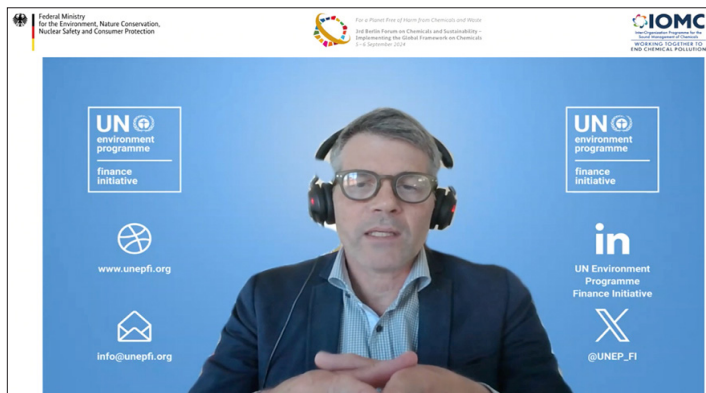
Session 4: Strengthening Innovative Financing for GFC Implementation: Exploring Novel Business Models and the Role of Financial Investors

The first of two keynotes, delivered by Richard Damania, Chief Economist, Sustainable Development Practice Group, World Bank, highlighted three priorities for chemicals management:

- building government capacity for the sound management of chemicals;
- research and development to create chemicals that are safe, which will require government intervention and support to be fully realized; and
- building public support for regulation and change.

The second keynote was delivered by Eric Usher, Head, UNEP Finance Initiative, who said scaling sustainable chemistry will require significant investment, necessitating the mobilization of financial resources from both public and private sources. He highlighted three relevant developments in the financial sector, namely:

- evolving understanding of environmental risks to doing business, including impacts from chemicals and waste management;
- evolving concept in the finance sector of dual materiality – both the risks that business poses to the environment and the risks the environment poses to business; and



Eric Usher, Head, UNEP Finance Initiative



Stephanie Lindemann-Kohrs, Director/Global Head Equity and Funds, KfW Development Bank

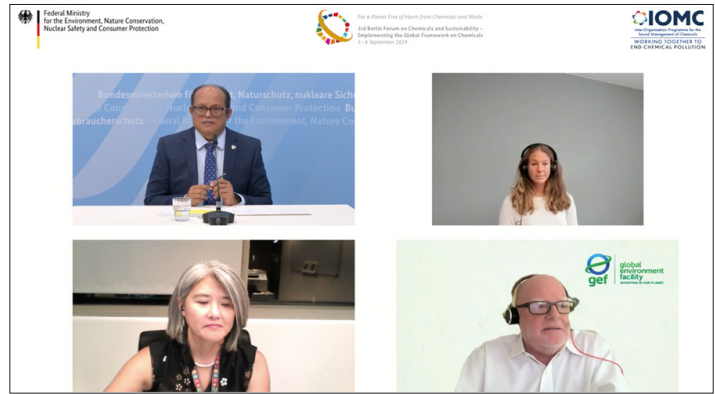
- the gradual transformation of voluntary environmental disclosure frameworks into mandatory forms.

Deep Dive: Blended Finance Equity and Funds: Stephanie Lindemann-Kohrs, Director/Global Head Equity and Funds, KfW Development Bank, explained the KfW, its mandate, and its efforts to achieve the SDGs through structured funds. She highlighted the work of KfW's Environment, Social and Governance First Fund, which helps small and medium-sized enterprises comply with Germany's Supply Chain Act and the anticipated European Union value chain due diligence directive, including helping such enterprises green their supply chains in the Global South. Lindemann-Kohrs provided a case study of the Fund's work with India's Agrostar, which is improving the horticulture firm's farming practices, environmental management systems, and management of chemicals and waste.

Panel Discussion: Claude Gascon, Director of Strategy and Operations, GEF, said the GEF has invested USD 2.4 million to improve the management of chemicals and waste, including funding to governments to improve their capacity for sound management. He explained how the GEF's Non-grant Instrument Program allows the GEF to partner with the private sector and financial institutions and attract private capital in blended finance projects such as the Green Global Supply Chain Decarbonization Platform project, which initially focused on greening the textile and apparel value chain, including the use of safe chemical alternatives in production. He noted GEF development with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) of a blended finance vehicle on chemicals and waste, including plastics. Gascon also highlighted the GEF's Integrated Programs, which handle environmental problems holistically, many of which include chemicals and waste management elements.

Karianne Lancee, Head of Sustainable Investing Portfolio Integration, UBS Asset Management, said engaging all actors in the financial market, including brokers and asset managers, requires a step-by-step approach, building and enhancing research, data, transparency, and disclosure, as well as regulatory frameworks. She stressed all actors in the market need to better understand the materiality involved based on aligned definitions.

Yoko Watanabe, Director for Environment, ADB, said the Bank recognizes the unsound management of chemicals



Panel discussion (clockwise from left): Co-Moderator **Rolph Payet**, BRS Conventions Executive Secretary; **Karianne Lancee**, Head of SI Portfolio Integration, UBS Asset Management; **Claude Gascon**, Director of Strategy and Operations, GEF; and **Yoko Watanabe**, Director of Environment, ADB

and waste as a driver of climate change and environmental degradation. She noted ADB use of grants to prompt action on plastics, and highlighted ADB's largest-ever policy-based loan of USD 500 million to Indonesia to strengthen its plastic marine debris reduction programme. Watanabe also cited development of the ADB's first dedicated trust fund facility on chemicals and waste, saying it will use grants to conduct needed assessments and help governments develop viable and scalable projects for the lending pipeline.

Statements: Valentine Uwamariya, Minister of Environment, Rwanda, remarked that her country is making significant progress in setting up an extended producer responsibility system for e-waste management and highlighted the Rwandan Green Fund's ability to leverage blended financing to derisk investment. She described the 2023 issuance, by the Development Bank of Rwanda, of sustainability-linked bonds, noting the bonds were issued in Rwandan Francs to reduce the risk of foreign exchange fluctuations.

Adalberto Maluf, National Secretary of Urban Environment and Environmental Quality, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, described his country's newly reconstituted National Commission on Chemical Safety, highlighting that it brings together stakeholders from government, industry, academia, and civil society to ensure integrated decision-



Adalberto Maluf, National Secretary of Urban Environment and Environmental Quality, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil

making on chemicals management. He said needed actions to ensure effective GFC implementation include institutional and governance strengthening, capacity building, monitoring, innovation, and sustainable technologies.

Rachel Crossley, Head of Stewardship, Europe, BNP Paribas Asset Management, discussed how to support industry to be effective partners in driving sustainable chemistry, identifying the need for:

- harmonized criteria and definitions across countries of hazardous and toxic chemicals, safe and sustainable alternatives, and low-carbon chemicals, based on the latest science;
- extensive, consistent, and mandatory corporate disclosure of the production and use of chemicals globally;
- definitive guidance on a sector-by-sector basis of what companies can do to make the transition to sustainable chemistry; and
- measures to include more institutional investors, such as her organization, in the GFC implementation process over the next few years.

Closing Reflections: Steven Stone, Deputy Director, Economy and Industry Division, UNEP, highlighted three different “baskets” for financing the GFC, as identified during the discussions so far: the public finance basket, which is essential for pure public goods like training and capacity building; the public-private finance basket, or blended finance, which is essential for derisking and for leveraging scarce public funds to leverage required private finance; and private finance, which will be the main source of the trillions of dollars needed for sustainable chemistry. He stressed that to scale up private finance, the essential drivers include definitions, disclosure, and definitive guidance. Stone underlined the need to dive deeper into these issues and called for a working group that includes financial sector and industry expertise, to hash out some of the solutions to drive forward chemicals sustainability.

Interactive Poll: Co-Moderator Hemmati presented participants’ ranking of areas they felt would attract investors to support GFC implementation. She said the top choice of nearly 80% of respondents was for creating investment opportunities, followed by: highlighting successful projects; strengthening reporting requirements for industry; offering tax benefits; and focusing on specific industries.



Co-Moderator **Minu Hemmati**, consultant to the BMUV



Kay Williams, Head, GFC Secretariat, Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP

Reflections from the GFC Secretariat

Kay Williams, Head, GFC Secretariat, Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP, expressed appreciation for the willingness to collaborate that was expressed by all participants during the Forum, and excitement over the strong presence of the IOMC Participating Organizations, and the health and labor sectors. Underlining the importance of effective chemicals management systems for global trade and investment, she said the GFC offers a unique opportunity to work across the value chain bringing all actors together.

Closing Session: Mobilizing Further Commitment for GFC Implementation

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO, pointed out that health is created, not primarily in hospitals and clinics, but also in homes, streets, workplaces, and the environment. He lamented the “preventable tragedy” of over two million deaths annually from chemical pollution in the air, food, water, homes, and workplaces. Welcoming the GFC with its ambitious vision and targets, he underlined his organization’s efforts to support countries to develop climate-resilient and environmentally-sustainable health systems.

Catherine Russell, Executive Director, UNICEF, emphasized every child’s right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, but lamented these rights are under threat from pollution. Expressing concern about children’s exposure to hazardous pesticides and the growing cocktail of toxins including from medical, electronic and household waste, she discussed her organization’s work with governments to identify and address the health impacts on children through children’s environmental health country profiles. Russell emphasized that all stakeholders have a role to play and invited them to join the Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative.

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India, highlighted ongoing policy initiatives to enhance alignment with global standards on hazardous chemicals and foster innovations for safer and more sustainable alternatives. Among other steps, he said India has ratified the listing of 19 persistent organic pollutants, banned 72 highly

hazardous pesticides, and is taking measures to minimize trade in ozone-depleting substances. On global-level priorities, he stressed the importance of resource mobilization through enhanced multistakeholder partnerships, and establishing robust monitoring mechanisms to track progress, assess impacts of integrated efforts, and allow for feedback loops.

Maisa Rojas, Minister of Environment, Chile, welcomed the role played by the Berlin Forum in convening diverse stakeholders to exchange experiences and create synergies to advance the sound management of chemicals. She said Chile has established a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder institutional framework to enhance coordination of chemicals and waste actions. She noted the importance of establishing the proposed SPP to advise the GFC and other relevant chemicals programmes at the international level.

María Luisa Albores, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico, stressed the role of the GFC in facilitating dialogue and collective action to tackle the triple planetary crisis. Outlining national implementation efforts, she stressed the need for holistic approaches that bring all stakeholder groups on board, mobilize sufficient technical and financial support, and ensure access to a clean and healthy environment for all.

Jacqueline Caanan, Assistant Secretary for Environment, the Philippines, stressed that effective management of chemicals and waste is largely dependent upon policies developed by governments, coupled with the compliance of regulated communities. She noted that while national circumstances differ, the GFC provides an important instrument for policy coherence at the national and global levels.

Speaking in his capacity as Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions, Rolph Payet said the Forum had provided valuable insights on how to further strengthen multilateral environmental agreements focused on the chemical lifecycle. He thanked the Government of Germany for its support and urged all stakeholders to “work, measure progress and be impactful.”

Christiane Rohleder, State Secretary, BMUV, Germany, acknowledged the logistical and substantive contributions of IOMC and its 10 Participating Organizations, noting the network is playing a key role in driving multi-sectoral



Christiane Rohleder, State Secretary, BMUV, Germany

collaboration for sustainable chemicals management. Recalling that ICCM5 had adopted Implementation Programmes as a core strategy to operationalize the GFC, she said the two-day discussions had provided valuable insights on how to drive action, noting in particular opportunities to engage downstream actors. She also welcomed reports on how stakeholders are operationalizing their ICCM5 commitments, specifying ICCA’s institutional capacity-building programme for African countries, the IOMC’s proposal to foster an implementation coalition, and plans for a new global alliance to end lead pollution, spearheaded by the World Bank, UNICEF, and the US Agency for International Development.

The meeting was brought to a close at 4:15 pm CEST.

Upcoming Meetings

CRC-20: The 20th meeting of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC-20) of the Rotterdam Convention will review 33 notifications of final regulatory action and four proposals for severely hazardous pesticide formulations for potential inclusion in the Rotterdam Convention. **dates:** 17-20 September 2023 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** www.brsmeas.org/

POPRC 20: The 20th meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention (POPRC-20) will consider proposals to list polyhalogenated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans (PXDD/PXDF) in Annex C to the Convention, as well as review the draft risk management evaluation for chlorpyrifos. Among other issues, it will review information related to stockpiles, products, and articles in use and in wastes. **dates:** 23-27 September 2024 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** www.brsmeas.org/

SEA of Solutions (SoS) 2024: SoS is a collaborative international partnership launched in 2019 that serves as a platform for sharing best practices, fostering collaboration, and exploring solutions to address plastic pollution at source. With negotiations towards an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution expected to conclude at the end of 2024, this year’s event aims to gather stakeholders to exchange knowledge and build partnerships ahead of the final session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an



Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions

international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC-5). **dates:** 23-27 September 2024 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** www.unep.org/events/unep-event/sea-solutions-2024-delivering-actions-end-plastic-pollution

12th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW): This annual campaign builds on successes in banning the use of lead in petrol and progress towards establishing national regulations limiting exposure to lead in paint. Under the theme “Bright Futures begin Lead Free,” this year’s event will shed light on the unacceptable risks of lead exposure and the need for action to protect children’s health. **dates:** 20-26 October 2024 **location:** worldwide **website:** www.who.int/campaigns/international-lead-poisoning-prevention-week/2024

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF): The 20th AGM of the IGF will meet under the theme: Redefining Mining: Balancing the Need for Minerals with Protecting People and the Planet. **dates:** 18-20 November 2024 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** igfmining.org/annual-general-meeting

5th Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution (INC-5): The negotiating process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, is expected to conclude at INC-5, paving the way for a Diplomatic Conference where Heads of State will sign the new treaty. **dates:** 25 November – 1 December 2024 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5

2024 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29): This event will include the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 29), the 19th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 19), and the sixth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 6) that will convene to complete the first enhanced transparency framework and the new collective quantified goal on finance, among other matters. The 61st sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 61) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 61) will also meet. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Abseron, Azerbaijan **www:** unfccc.int/calendar/events-list

OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting for a New Science-Policy Panel (SPP) on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution: Following the first part of the third Ad Hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention (OEWG 3.1) in June 2024, OEWG 3.2 is expected to finalize its substantive proposals ahead of the first intergovernmental meeting to establish the new SPP. **dates:** January 2025 (tentative) **location:** Bangkok, Thailand (tentative) **www:** unep.org/oweg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org



Group photo of representatives from IOMC and BMUV, Germany, at the end of the Forum

Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BMUV	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions
Cefic	European Chemical Industry Council
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFC	Global Framework for Chemicals
GHS	Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
IOMC	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
KPI	Key performance indicator
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBA	Responsible Business Alliance
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPP	Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals and Waste
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	UN Children’s Fund
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	UN Institute for Training and Research
WHO	World Health Organization