



ICCM OEWG2 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2014

OEWG2 opened at the International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland on Monday, 15 December 2014. In the morning, participants heard opening statements from the ICCM4 President and the Head of UNEP Chemicals Branch. Discussions began on progress and gaps towards the achievement of the 2020 goal. In the afternoon, the OEWG discussed the draft Overall Orientation and Guidance (OOG) for achieving the 2020 goal, and the SDGs and sound chemicals management beyond 2020. Two contact groups met in the evening, one on the OOG, the other on the SDGs and chemicals management beyond 2020.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was opened by ICCM4 President Richard Lesiyampe (Kenya), presiding as OEWG2 chair. He stressed the need to assess what is needed to ensure the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals is met. He explained that much of the meeting will be devoted to discussion of the draft OOG, which is expected to be the main strategic outcome of ICCM4. He called for proposals for priority issues to place on the ICCM4 agenda, and ideas on how ICCM4 may address sound chemicals management beyond 2020.

Fatoumata Keita-Ouane, Head, UNEP Chemicals Branch, emphasized: the intense work on chemicals and waste within UNEP in recent years; the references to chemicals and waste in three of the proposed SDGs; and how UNEA Resolution 1/5 strengthened UNEP's commitment to the Strategic Approach. She called for improving the involvement of all stakeholders in SAICM.

The meeting adopted the agenda as proposed (SAICM/OEWG.2/1). President Lesiyampe discussed his scenario note (SAICM/OEWG.2/2) and the planned organization of work. The meeting endorsed the Bureau's nomination of Marcus Richards (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) as rapporteur.

PROGRESS AND GAPS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 2020 GOAL OF SOUND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS, STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF WORKING TOWARDS THE 2020 GOAL: The Secretariat introduced the summary of the outcomes of the Strategic Approach 2013–2014 regional priority-setting workshops and resolutions adopted at the regional meetings (SAICM/OEWG.2/3) and a compilation of regional chemicals challenges in the implementation of SAICM (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF/3).

Tanzania, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed the importance of measuring the progress between ICCM sessions, operationalizing SAICM financing, and further work on the

emerging policy issues (EPIs). Saying the 2020 goal "should be a vehicle rather than a destination," he emphasized the need to sustain the current achievements and establish a platform to continue to address chemicals management issues post 2020.

Iraq, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP called for more capacity building support and financing, in particular on dealing with chemical accidents, information exchange between national stakeholders, and providing information to the public on hazardous chemicals and risks.

Poland, for the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE GROUP, stressed more support for poison control centers, management of industrial accidents, implementation of international chemicals conventions, multi-stakeholder engagement, and use of GHS.

Paraguay, for the LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), highlighted financing, specific measures on highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs), and inclusion of environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants (EPPPs) as an EPI at ICCM4.

The UK, for the WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS GROUP, stressed the importance of compliance with national and international chemicals regulations and making information and guidance on chemicals management more usable.

Italy, for the EU, noted its areas for improvement on chemicals management including data on hazardous waste sites and coverage of vulnerable groups in risk assessment.

CHINA highlighted measures to evaluate highly hazardous chemicals. INDIA noted progress on eliminating use of lead in paint. PERU called for increased coordination on the prohibition or substitution of HHPs.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted support for good governance of chemicals management in other African countries. The SECRETARIAT OF THE BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS highlighted the role of the regional centers of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions in networking, awareness raising and dissemination of information. The INTERNATIONAL POPS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) and the African Regional Organization of the INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC) stressed the need for SAICM to address HHPs. MARSHALL ISLANDS, with the PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK (PAN), urged the OEWG to consider inviting the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO) to develop a proposal for a global alliance to phase out HHPs.

UNEP emphasized the importance of the regional approach towards the 2020 goal. The US underscored the need to address the promotion of safer alternatives and the issues of transparency and public engagement.

THAILAND stressed the need to tackle illegal international trafficking in chemicals. LEBANON noted the low implementation of GHS in developing countries.



PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH OVERARCHING POLICY STRATEGY:

The Secretariat introduced the report on progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach for 2011–2013 and supporting documentation (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF4, INF5, INF6, INF7, INF8, INF16, INF18 and INF22). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for the INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS (IOMC), discussed the IOMC analysis of progress toward the 2020 goal (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF5).

The AFRICAN GROUP suggested the lessons learnt on the long-term sustainability and relevance of information sharing mechanisms be reflected in the report.

The EU said what SAICM delivers is complex and difficult to understand, and suggested further efforts are needed for timely and quality reporting for the third progress report.

UNEP noted the widening reporting capacity gap between least developing countries (LDCs) and mid- and upper-income countries. He suggested activities be targeted at LDCs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEALTH SECTOR

STRATEGY: WHO presented its reports on health sector engagement with the Strategic Approach for the period 2011–2013 (SAICM/OEWG.2/8) and on WHO activities related to the implementation of the Strategic Approach (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF/17).

The EU suggested strengthened health sector involvement in developing countries and called for appropriate staffing of the WHO section dealing with chemicals. The AFRICAN GROUP stressed that the health sector role needs to be better defined in national legislation on chemicals and waste management.

SWITZERLAND proposed that SAICM be invited to present on progress at the next WHO Executive Board.

UNEP said that it will continue to work with the WHO to address the environment and health nexus towards the 2020 goal.

HEALTH CARE WITHOUT HARM and the HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT ALLIANCE discussed reducing the use of chemicals in health care settings.

The INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF DOCTORS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (ISDE) called for the rapid implementation of the health strategy with the WHO as a “strong and firm” leader.

PANAMA stressed that countries should improve information on lead and mercury poisoning.

OVERALL ORIENTATION AND GUIDANCE ON

THE 2020 GOAL: The Secretariat introduced the background information to the OOG (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF/2), the draft OOG (SAICM/OEWG.2/4), and UNEA Resolution 1/5 (SAICM/OEWG.2/5).

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHEMICAL ASSOCIATIONS (ICCA) stressed the need for prioritizing OOG elements. The IOMC questioned the need for a new mechanism or process regarding EPIs, and called for perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) to be included. JAPAN suggested greater emphasis on trade issues.

The AFRICAN GROUP suggested the inclusion of social mobilization. IPEN said the OOG needs to include output goals, statements of current gaps, and quantifiable milestones for EPIs.

The HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND WASTES expressed the hope to work together with all SAICM participants in his work.

UNEP urged against creating more core activities and called for keeping the OOG “simple but comprehensive.” WHO called for the OOG to include monitoring and assessment of health impacts of chemicals and strengthening of poison centers.

JORDAN suggested the OOG should define responsibilities in implementing SAICM.

The EU suggested referring to the 11 basic elements to all chemicals and waste management aspects and the need to take an

integrated approach to financing beyond the special programme adopted at the UNEA.

KENYA stressed enhancing responsibility of stakeholders is the most urgent one to be implemented.

CANADA, with US and IRAQ, suggested adding specific priorities, promoting safer alternatives, and transparency and public participation during policy making.

President Lesiyampe noted the positive feedback and general agreement on the draft OOG, and suggested the Secretariat incorporate the comments received and finalize the text with the support of the Bureau. He also proposed and participants agreed to establish a contact group on OOG co-chaired by Brazil and Denmark.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS BEYOND 2020

The Secretariat presented its note on the sound management of chemicals and waste in the context of the sustainable development goals (SAICM/OEWG.2/9) and UNEA Resolution 1/5 on chemicals and waste.

All delegations intervening welcomed the inclusion of chemicals in SDGs. The UN ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP (EMG) reported on UN system-wide support in achieving the sound management of chemicals and wastes (SAICM/OEWG.2/INF/22), highlighting an ongoing mapping of UN initiatives on chemicals and waste.

The AFRICAN GROUP, with ZAMBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, the EU, SWITZERLAND and RUSSIAN FEDERATION recommended the establishment of a contact group to discuss chemicals in the context of the SDGs and beyond 2020. The AFRICAN GROUP noted the need for an intersessional process from ICCM4 to ICCM5 on these issues.

JAPAN welcomed the opportunity for exchanging information at OEWG2 and ICCM4 on the role of SAICM in post-2015 development agenda.

The EU underscored the long-term importance of UNEA Resolution 1/5 on strengthening the sound management of chemicals and waste. SWITZERLAND stressed the relevance of SAICM to the SDG process and said ICCM4 should consider both chemicals in SDGs and their continued relevance beyond 2020.

MEXICO supported the role of SAICM as a tool for reaching the SDG chemicals targets.

IPEN emphasized the need for global targets and indicators besides national ones, and asked what will happen to intergovernmental cooperation and chemical safety after 2020. IPEN and the CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW called for “the post-2020 issue” to be placed on the ICCM4 agenda.

President Lesiyampe established a contact group on the SDGs and sound management of chemicals beyond 2020, co-chaired by Switzerland and Liberia.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates arrived in Geneva with mixed expectations for the three days, with eyeing the short- and medium-term, i.e. the road to ICCM4 and the 2020 goal, while others fretted about the long-term or the fate of intergovernmental cooperation on chemicals safety beyond 2020. A sensitive issue that came to the fore during the morning plenary was that of HHPs. While some delegates and regional groups identified progress, such as understanding the legal status and alternatives to HHPs, there was a strong call by many for international leadership on the issue. A key point of contention among participants seems to be on HHP governance. Some argued guidelines and increased information and data collection on HHPs suffice while others advocated a global alliance to phase-out and promote safer alternatives, given their disproportionate impact on developing countries and countries with economies in transition.