



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

EMG

24th Senior Officials Meeting

Monday 24th September 2018

Briefing Note:

The Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

1. Adopted by the First International Conference on Chemicals Management in 2006 in Dubai, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a policy framework to promote chemical safety around the world. The Strategic Approach was developed by a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral Preparatory Committee and supports the achievement of the 2020 goal agreed at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. The overall objective of the Strategic Approach is the achievement of the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health.
2. At its fourth session held in September 2015, the International Conference on Chemicals Management in its resolution IV/4 (see Annex) decided to initiate an intersessional process for preparing recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. In resolution IV/4, the Conference noted the value of a voluntary, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to mobilize all actors, which can enable flexible and timely action to promote the sound management of chemicals and waste.
3. The intersessional process is tasked with preparing recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, for the consideration of the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management to be held in 2020. Furthermore, the intersessional process is tasked with considering the need for and develop recommendations regarding measurable objectives in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. The second meeting of the intersessional process was held from 13-15 March 2018 in Stockholm, Sweden upon the invitation of the Government of Sweden. The third Strategic Approach Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) will meet in Uruguay from 2-4 April 2019 where further deliberations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 will take place.
5. Consideration is being given to the establishment of a high-level multi-sectoral conference for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 that would foster high-level multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral discussion and exchange of experience on chemicals and waste issues, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The intention would be to engage the commitment of the highest possible level of policy and political officials in their development through the United Nations General Assembly and/or the High-Level Political Forum; to promote inclusion of sound management of chemicals and waste in national sustainable development plans and in relevant sectoral plans and budgets (e.g. national health, labour, social, environment, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, research, education); and to strengthen linkages and partnerships between chemicals and waste units and other relevant aspects, sectors, and stakeholders of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional, and international levels.

6. The Government of Sweden launched a High-Level Alliance on Chemicals and Waste with the aim of mobilizing political engagement for more effective global management of chemicals and waste during a side-event at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2018 in New York. The aim of the Alliance, which is the first of its kind, is to reach a global agreement on chemicals and waste in 2020 in follow-up to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management which sunsets in 2020. The launch saw participation of ministers and high-level officials from governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and industry and included discussions on how the Alliance will promote an ambitious approach to sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.
7. The EMG is planning to host a Nexus Dialogue on 13 December 2018 (date to be confirmed) to consider the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste as an example of an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability along the supply chain. Looking closely at the life cycle of chemicals from the production stages till the disposal of waste will help us identify gaps and opportunities to contribute to the achievement of SDG 12 and the beyond 2020 framework. The supply chain of the textile sector will be used as a concrete example in this dialogue. This dialogue will aim to engage stakeholders from the UN System, Member States, Private Sector, NGOs and academia. The dialogue could result in a formal contribution to the beyond 2020 process and the 4th Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly in terms of suggested actions.

Points for consideration

Senior Officials may wish to:

- i. Support an ambitious policy approach on the sound management of chemicals and waste to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where existing conventions, platforms and initiatives work together and contribute to achieve the vision and share common objectives and targets;
- ii. Engage strategically in the third Strategic Approach Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) in Uruguay from 2-4 April 2019.
- iii. Discuss what is the most effective option to raise the profile of sound management of chemicals and waste within the United Nations system and in the broader context of economic and social development planning.
- iv. Discuss what areas seem to provide most potential for future inter-agency discussion and possible collaboration and how this may be implemented, including through the Interagency Meetings on Sound Chemicals Management initiated by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals.
- v. Discuss the timing to 2020 of SDG target 12.4 ¹ related to environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste throughout the lifecycle (see below) and any related next steps in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development process.

¹ *SDG Target 12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.*

Annex

International Conference on Chemicals Management Resolution IV/4: The Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

The Conference,

Recalling the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Noting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular the targets to achieve, by 2020, the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycles, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and to significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment and to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination by 2030,

Recalling the Millennium Development Goals and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled "The future we want", and in particular the aim to achieve, by 2020, the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycles and of hazardous waste in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment,

Recalling also resolution 1/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, in which the Environment Assembly welcomed the important contribution of the Strategic Approach in facilitating action by all relevant stakeholders towards the sound management of chemicals and waste, emphasized the need for continued and strengthened multisectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement and recognized that the need to prevent or minimize the significant adverse effects from chemicals and hazardous wastes on human health and the environment would continue to provide a strong basis for sound chemicals and waste management beyond 2020,

Recalling further the outcome of the country-led consultative process supported by the United Nations Environment Programme on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and waste cluster and the outcome document of the process, entitled "Strengthening the sound management of chemicals and wastes in the long term",

Noting that projections as set out in the 2012 Global Chemicals Outlook show an increase in chemical production and use worldwide, continuing beyond 2020, with the largest increases also occurring in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and that all countries will need to continue strengthening their capacity for governance, knowledge- and information-sharing and risk reduction required to promote the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020,

Noting also the continuing need to respond to new and emerging issues and to ensure that newly identified risks to human health and the environment can be identified and timely action taken to reduce those risks,

Noting further the value of a voluntary, multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to mobilize all actors, which can enable flexible and timely action to promote the sound management of chemicals and waste,

Recognizing the need to start considering arrangements for the period beyond 2020,

1. *Requests* the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to contract an independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach in accordance with the terms of reference set out in the annex to the present resolution;
2. *Decides* to initiate an intersessional process to prepare recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;
3. *Also decides* that the intersessional process should include, in principle, two meetings before the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group and one meeting between the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group and the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management and that it may also work by correspondence and/or by electronic means.

4. *Directs* the Open-ended Working Group to consider the need to call an additional meeting of the intersessional process before the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management;
5. *Decides* that meetings of the intersessional process should, as far as possible, be held back-to-back with other relevant meetings and processes;
6. *Requests* the Bureau of the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, with assistance of the secretariat, to notify the stakeholders by 31 March 2016 of the first meeting of the intersessional process specified in the present resolution and, in consultation with the participants at that first meeting, to draw up the timetable for the subsequent meetings;
7. *Decides* that the intersessional process should be open to all stakeholders and requests the secretariat to support, subject to the availability of resources, the participation of stakeholders eligible for funding as identified by the regions and sectors through the Bureau, up to eight from African States, eight from Asian-Pacific States, three from Central and Eastern European States, five from Latin American and Caribbean States and two representatives of each of the health, trade union and public interest sectors of non-governmental participants, in order to support balanced regional and sectoral participation;
8. *Also decides* that the participants at the first meeting of the intersessional process should elect two co-chairs from among the Governmental participants present at that meeting;
9. *Further decides* that the work of the intersessional process is to be informed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, resolution 1/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the outcome document "Strengthening the sound management of chemicals and wastes in the long term", including the vision to achieve the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycles and of hazardous wastes in ways that lead to the prevention or minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment as an essential contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development;
10. *Decides* that the intersessional process should, among other things, consider the need for and develop recommendations regarding measurable objectives in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
11. *Requests* that the secretariat make available and that the intersessional process consider relevant available documents, including the independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach referred to in paragraph 1 above, the overall orientation and guidance, relevant documents and reports of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, the Open-ended Working Group and regional meetings, relevant United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions and other relevant documents available on the Strategic Approach website, the Global Chemicals Outlook, Global Waste Management Outlook, report entitled "Cost of Inaction on the Sound Management of Chemicals" by the United Nations Environment Programme and related World Health Organization health priority documents;
12. *Directs* the Open-ended Working Group to consider the conclusions of the independent evaluation and any recommendations identified by the intersessional process for consideration by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session.