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**International environmental policy and
governance issues: chemicals and waste**

Resolution 1/5: chemicals and waste

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report, pursuant to part IX of resolution 1/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on chemicals and waste, describes the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1/5.

Rather than provide an exhaustive account of the activities and results of the chemicals and waste subprogramme of the programme of work of UNEP, the report highlights those related directly to resolution 1/5 and presents additional information on activities in support of its further implementation.

* UNEP/EA.2/1.

I. Introduction

1. The present progress report provides a summary of activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to implement United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/5, on chemicals and waste. More detailed information on those activities is provided in documents UNEP/EA.2/INF/18, UNEP/EA.2/INF/19, UNEP/EA.2/INF/20 and UNEP/EA.2/INF/21.

II. Continued strengthening of the sound management of chemicals and waste in the long term

2. At its first session the United Nations Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director to forward, for information regarding policies and actions, the outcome document of the country-led consultative process on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and waste cluster in the long term, entitled “Strengthening the sound management of chemicals and wastes in the long term” (UNEP/EA.1/5/Add.2) to:

(a) The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Minamata Convention on Mercury at its sixth session;

(c) The Open-ended Working Group of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management at its second session and the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fourth session;

(d) The conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;

(e) The Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).

3. The Executive Director’s report was submitted to those bodies, as requested, and was welcomed by all.

4. The presentation of the report at the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management led, in combination with other inputs, to the adoption of resolution IV/4 on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (see SAICM /ICCM.4/15).

5. Resolution IV/4 calls for an independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach and an intersessional process consisting of two meetings before the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, tentatively scheduled to take place in 2018, and a third between that meeting and the fifth session of the Conference; the Working Group is also mandated to decide whether additional meetings are required. The intersessional meetings will be open to all Strategic Approach stakeholders, with a predetermined number to be funded subject to the availability of resources.

III. Integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste

6. At its first session, the United Nations Environment Assembly welcomed “an integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes” underscoring that “the three components of an integrated approach, mainstreaming, industry involvement and dedicated external finance, are mutually reinforcing and are all important for the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste at all levels” (resolution 1/5, sect. II). At the same time, the Assembly requested the Executive Director, in conformity with the terms of reference for the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, to “establish and administer the Special Programme trust fund and to provide a secretariat to deliver administrative support to the Programme”, and to “submit the terms of reference for the Special Programme to the conferences of the parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Open-ended Working Group of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management for their information” (resolution 1/5, sect. II).

A. Dedicated external financing: Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level

7. The secretariat of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, hosted within the Chemicals and Waste Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of UNEP, became operational in 2015 with the appointment of a Programme Officer.

8. The trust fund for the Special Programme has been established by United Nations Headquarters, and significant contributions have been pledged, as at 24 February 2016, by the European Union (€11 million) and the Governments of Germany (€180,000), Finland (€200,000), Sweden (\$180,000) and the United States of America (\$750,000).

9. The Special Programme now has an Executive Board. Recipient countries are represented on the Board by Argentina and Brazil, representing the Latin America and the Caribbean region (these countries will share the two-year term); Kenya, representing Africa; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, representing Central and Eastern Europe; and Yemen, representing least developed countries and small island developing States. The country to represent Asia and the Pacific will be selected by the region from among the nominations received. The board also includes representatives of the donor countries, namely the European Union, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United States.

10. The first meeting of the Executive Board was held in Geneva on 2 and 3 February 2016, and significant progress was made, with agreement reached¹ on the rules of procedure for the Executive Board, the application guidelines and application forms. A proposed schedule for 2016 was also agreed upon, with the first round of applications for support under the Special Programme expected to be launched by April 2016. It is anticipated that the first projects to receive funding under the Programme will be approved by the Board at its second meeting in the last quarter of 2016.

B. Mainstreaming

11. In 2015, in support of the implementation of the mainstreaming component of the integrated approach, an analysis was carried out of the outcomes of the mainstreaming projects under a UNEP/United Nations Development Programme partnership initiative on the integration of the sound management of chemicals into development planning processes to support the Strategic Approach, made possible by a grant from the Government of Denmark. The analysis, which is available on the UNEP website, provides a succinct overview of the experience gained and lessons learned from 15 country projects and is aimed at assisting countries considering the implementation of mainstreaming activities to strengthen the financial base for the sound management of chemicals and waste by providing information and knowledge on challenges and opportunities encountered during implementation. More detailed information on those experiences and lessons learned is available in the Executive Director's report on the implementation of the integrated approach to the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEA/EA.2/INF/18).

12. In further support of the mainstreaming component of the integrated approach, enhanced efforts on the linkages between environment and health have been promoted through the development of a project entitled "Integrated Health and Environment Observatories and Legal and Institutional Strengthening for the Sound Management of Chemicals in Africa", which was approved by the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at its forty-eighth meeting, in June 2015. The full-scale project will focus on reinforcing the linkages between the environment and health sectors at the local, national and regional levels across nine African countries, with a view to mainstreaming the sound management of chemicals and waste into national development plans and budgets as they pertain to those two sectors.

13. At the wider United Nations level, the United Nations Environment Management Group established a time-bound issue management group in 2014 to raise the profile of sound chemicals management in the United Nations system. The aim was to promote the integration of sound chemicals management into a broader context of economic and social development planning and to ensure additional synergies between United Nations organizations in supporting countries in activities to achieve the World Summit on Sustainable Development goal of sound chemicals management by 2020.

¹ At its first meeting, the Executive Board reached agreement ad interim, pending the nomination of the Executive Board member representing the Asia and the Pacific region. Final approval of the documents will take place by 4 March 2016.

14. The Environment Management Group, in a synthesis report entitled “United Nations and sound chemicals management: coordinating delivery for Member States and sustainable development”, underlines the importance of sound chemicals management for the broader sustainable development agenda, showcases what has already been accomplished and indicates how the United Nations system can further assist Member States in achieving sound chemicals management in the context of sustainable development. The report provides guidance and best-practice examples to countries on how to successfully mainstream the sound management of chemicals and waste into national development plans.

C. Industry involvement

15. UNEP, with support from the Government of Sweden, has developed guidance on sound chemicals management entitled “Guidance on development of legislation, administrative infrastructures and recovery of administrative costs”, which includes proposals for ensuring industry involvement under an integrated approach to financing, with a focus on the division of responsibilities and use of cost-recovery measures to support national administrations in implementing and enforcing chemicals legislation. The guidance has been used at a number of national, regional and international events to showcase the benefits to sound chemicals management of industry involvement.

16. To facilitate industry involvement in Africa and the Asia and the Pacific region, UNEP, with support from the Government of Sweden, organized two regional workshops to raise the awareness of Governments and industry of:

- (a) What industry involvement in the integrated approach would entail;
- (b) The benefits and necessity of involving industry in the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (c) The contribution of industry involvement to national long-term financing;
- (d) Issues for further consideration, based on the workshop discussions.

17. With regard to successful implementation of the industry component of the integrated approach, workshop participants underlined the importance of the involvement and engagement of various sectors of industry and other stakeholders. It was also recognized that a collaborative framework needed to be established and/or strengthened for those sectors and for public authorities to foster the sound management of chemicals and ensure sustainability. Additional information on the results of the workshops is available in the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the integrated approach to financing of sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEA/EA.2/INF/18).

IV. Sustainable development

18. At the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, member States emphasized that the sound management of chemicals and waste was an essential and integral cross-cutting element of sustainable development and of great relevance to the sustainable development agenda.

19. Sound chemicals and waste management relates and contributes to achieving almost all of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 3, on good health and well-being; Goal 6, on clean water and sanitation; Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities; and Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production.

20. To advance international and national analysis and action to explore and reap the benefits of synergies between Sustainable Development Goal implementation and implementation of the international chemicals and waste agreements, the Chemicals and Waste Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research have further strengthened their collaboration. The results of the initial phase of enhanced collaboration are presented in an information document (UNEA/EA.2/INF/20), with thematic examples of how national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals can be fostered through the implementation of specific multilateral environmental agreements and vice versa.

21. Activities organized through the collaboration included initial analysis of, and preparation of awareness-raising materials on, the interface between the Sustainable Development Goals and chemicals and waste management in 2014; the organization of a side event on the interface at the fourth session of the International Conference on the Sound Management of Chemicals, in 2015; and the organization, in cooperation with IOMC partner organizations, of an international workshop on

integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and international chemicals and waste agreements, scheduled for 11 to 13 April 2016.

V. Mercury

22. The United Nations Environment Assembly, at its first session, requested the Executive Director to facilitate cooperation, as appropriate, between the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and others in order to make full use of relevant experience and expertise that might assist countries in joining the Minamata Convention on Mercury, subject to the availability of resources for that purpose.

23. As at 29 February 2016, 23 countries had deposited instruments of ratification, approval, accession or acceptance in respect of the Minamata Convention. There are indications that a larger number of other countries intend to deposit such instruments before the end of 2015. Based on the information available to the interim secretariat, it is estimated that the Convention will enter into force in the third or fourth quarter of 2016 following the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties is therefore tentatively planned for the second half of 2017.

24. Following an offer from Jordan to host the seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, preparations are under way in Jordan to hold that session from 10 to 15 March 2016, following regional meetings on 9 March 2016. Plans are also under way to hold regional meetings in preparation for the session and to include on their agendas issues of relevance under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. A brief summary of the outcome of the seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee is presented in document UNEA/EA.2/INF/21, together with an update on the status of ratifications, approvals, accessions and acceptances.

25. In the work of organizing and developing substantive documents for sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee, as well as supporting countries with regard to the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention, the interim secretariat has cooperated, as appropriate, with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, principally with regard to scientific and technical cooperation, the organization and servicing of meetings, policy and strategic issues, information systems, and outreach and communication. This cooperation has enhanced the ratification and implementation efforts of countries. There has also been close cooperation, to make full use of their relevant experience and expertise, with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the GEF secretariat.

26. Activities for the implementation of the Minamata Convention have focused on subregional awareness-raising workshops to assist countries in developing a road map towards ratification. In addition, regional activities have provided opportunities for consideration of – and information-sharing on – regional issues and challenges. A number of pilot projects have been undertaken by the interim secretariat to support work towards implementation. Since March 2014, 12 subregional and 4 regional workshops have been organized to support ratification and early implementation of the Convention. The regional workshops were held back-to-back with regional meetings to prepare for the 2015 meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. More than 1,000 participants from 135 countries and from civil society and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have taken part in the workshops.

27. The portfolio of GEF-funded projects to support countries in the completion of enabling activities under the Minamata Convention currently consists of 38 mercury initial assessment projects and 10 national action plans, with more in the pipeline; there are also mercury projects on primary mining and unintentional emissions being implemented with GEF financial support. The GEF portfolio for the Minamata Convention offers possibilities for synergies with GEF projects being implemented by the Chemicals and Waste Branch to achieve the objectives of the Stockholm Convention. Examples include strengthening national capacities to measure concentrations and transport of persistent organic pollutants and supporting countries in preparing road maps for implementation of the Convention.

28. The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership has continued to facilitate on-the-ground action to reduce the environmental and health risk of mercury as a contribution to the implementation of the Minamata Convention. The contribution of UNEP to the Partnership includes a demonstration project on mercury-free gold mining technologies in Indonesia; a project to reduce the use of mercury-containing dental amalgams in three African countries; workshops on coal combustion, mercury-containing products and waste management; and development of the *Practical Sourcebook*

on *Mercury Waste Storage and Disposal*. UNEP is also implementing a number of GEF projects in areas such as reducing mercury emissions from coal combustion in the energy sector of the Russian Federation, reducing risks associated with mercury mining sites in Kyrgyzstan and developing a global monitoring plan. UNEP organized information events on the Partnership in four regions in the margins of the regional consultation meetings on the Minamata Convention in January and February 2016, and a Partnership Advisory Group meeting in Jordan on 8 March 2016.

VI. Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

29. At its first session, the United Nations Environment Assembly:

(a) Invited the Open-ended Working Group of the Strategic Approach at its second session and the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fourth meeting to consider ways to improve the involvement and participation of all relevant stakeholders and thereby also enable efficient and effective responses to new and emerging issues and challenges;

(b) Requested the Executive Director to continue to support the Strategic Approach, including in the development of overall orientation and guidance on implementing the 2020 goal;

(c) Requested the Executive Director to send, for the following meeting of the Executive Board of WHO, an invitation to the Director-General of that organization to assume a leading role in the Strategic Approach and to provide appropriate staff and other resources to its secretariat;

(d) Invited members of IOMC to consider ways to support the Strategic Approach secretariat, including through possible staffing support;

(e) Called on Governments, intergovernmental organizations, industry, civil society and other Strategic Approach stakeholders to support the implementation and further development of the Strategic Approach;

(f) Urged Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry and others in a position to do so to make financial and in-kind contributions to the Strategic Approach, its secretariat and its implementation, including through the programme of work of the members of IOMC.

A. Outcomes of the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management

30. The fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management was held in Geneva from 28 September to 2 October 2015. The session was attended by more than 750 participants representing Governments, intergovernmental organizations, industry and civil society, and it included a high-level segment with the participation of ministers, heads of agencies and organizations and senior representatives of major groups and stakeholders, including industry.

31. The fourth session concluded with the adoption of the following five resolutions:

(a) Resolution IV/1, on implementation towards the achievement of the 2020 goal, which, among other things, endorses the overall orientation and guidance (SAICM/ICCM.4/6, annex) that clearly spells out actions to be taken by all Strategic Approach stakeholders to achieve the 2020 goal;

(b) Resolution IV/4, on the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, which, among other things, provides for an intersessional process to prepare recommendations on the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;

(c) Resolution IV/2, on emerging policy issues, which, in addition to promoting further action on existing issues, designates environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants as a new emerging policy issue to be addressed under the Strategic Approach;

(d) Resolution IV/3, on highly hazardous pesticides;

(e) Resolution IV/5, on activities of the secretariat and on the budget, which covers the period 2016–2020 through to the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, with an increase in the budget and staffing for the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to enable it to provide increased support to all stakeholders in implementing the 2020 goal, to develop a clearing-house and knowledge management platform, and to support the intersessional process on chemicals and waste management beyond 2020.

B. Strategic Approach secretariat

32. In response to the request from the United Nations Environment Assembly at its first session (resolution 1/5, sect. V), the Executive Director of UNEP sent a letter to the Director-General of WHO underlining that organization's important role in the Strategic Approach and requesting it to provide appropriate staff and other resources to the Strategic Approach secretariat. The Executive Director also forwarded the letter, as requested, to the January 2015 meeting of the WHO Executive Board.

33. UNEP has further responded to the call to play a lead role in arranging for an effective and efficient secretariat for the Strategic Approach by completing the recruitment of an Associate Programme Officer for the Quick Start Programme and strengthening the secretariat by upgrading the Coordination Officer position funded by UNEP, thereby increasing the political importance attached to the Strategic Approach; continuing to fund its general service staff; and continuing to provide administrative services, including to the Quick Start Programme, through the DTIE Chemicals and Waste Branch.

34. The International Conference on Chemicals Management, at its fourth session, approved the establishment of a P-3 post of Programme Officer for Knowledge Management and the upgrading of the P-2 post of General Associate Programme Officer to the P-3 Programme Officer level. The Strategic Approach secretariat is also supported, when necessary, by consultants with regard to specific activities.

35. When organizing the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, the Strategic Approach secretariat cooperated, as appropriate, with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. During that period, the key areas of cooperation related to scientific and technical cooperation, the organization and servicing of meetings, policy and strategic matters, clearing-house mechanisms, information systems, and outreach and communication.

C. UNEP activities to support implementation of the Strategic Approach

36. Part V of resolution 1/5, on the Strategic Approach, calls on all stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, to support the implementation and further development of the Strategic Approach. UNEP has been leading or working in coordination and cooperation with other IOMC organizations in addressing a number of Strategic Approach emerging policy issues and other issues of concern.

37. With regard to endocrine-disrupting chemicals, UNEP has conducted regional awareness-raising sessions in the margins of Strategic Approach regional workshops in the Asia and the Pacific region, in Central and Eastern Europe, in Africa, and in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The knowledge and policy gaps identified at the workshops are being addressed through a UNEP project to increase intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration and awareness entitled "Provision of information on endocrine-disrupting chemicals". UNEP is also developing a dedicated website to convey highlights of key messages on endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

38. With regard to chemicals in products, the programme developed by UNEP as a voluntary framework for all Strategic Approach stakeholders was welcomed by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fourth session, and the Conference took note of the accompanying guidance on chemicals in products prepared by UNEP as a practical means of supporting implementation of the programme. UNEP was invited to continue to lead the programme in an open, transparent and inclusive manner and to promote and facilitate the implementation of activities, with input from stakeholders. UNEP is implementing pilot activities to facilitate information exchange on chemicals in textile products in China and will continue to engage stakeholders in addressing other key product groups, such as toys, electronics and building materials.

39. Following up on the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, UNEP will work, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WHO, on the development of modalities for international coordination on highly hazardous pesticides in the context of IOMC. To support that work, UNEP and other IOMC organizations, together with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm conventions, have established a small working group to develop a portal to provide joint information from diverse sources in a uniform way.

40. The Conference, at its fourth session, established environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants as an emerging policy issue; agreed that international cooperation was crucial for building awareness and understanding and promoting action to address the issue; and recognized the existence of knowledge gaps regarding exposure to – and the effects of – the pollutants, as well as the urgent need to improve the availability of – and access to – relevant information. UNEP is committed to

generating and sharing information to fill the identified gaps. UNEP is also launching a scoping exercise that aims to collect and compile information on studies, existing practices, applicable legislation, stakeholders and current work in progress in relation to this new emerging policy issue. The output will be a document where the main sources of information and knowledge are compiled and made available by electronic means.

VII. Lead and cadmium

41. Member States, at the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, recognized the significant risks to human health and the environment arising from releases of lead and cadmium into the environment and requested UNEP, in coordination with WHO, to continue to build capacity to phase out lead in paint through possible regional workshops.

42. UNEP and the World Health Organization co-host the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint with a view to establishing legally binding limits to the use of lead in paint by 2020. As of August 2015, 59 Governments had reported having in place legally binding restrictions on the use of lead in paint. In September 2015, to assist Governments and stakeholders in the phasing out of lead in paint, the Alliance, supported by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, launched a web-based Toolkit for Establishing Laws to Control the Use of Lead in Paint. In December 2015, UNEP organized an East African subregional workshop in Addis Ababa to assist Governments in establishing regulations on lead in paint. UNEP has also implemented a GEF-funded project to phase out lead paint in Africa. The toolkit will continue to be updated to provide technical support to Governments and stakeholders to enable them to achieve the Alliance goal of having regulations on lead paint in place in all countries by 2020.

43. Batteries account for more than 80 per cent of the global demand for lead, and many reports have identified environmental and health risks arising from the unsound management and recycling of used lead batteries. To address the issue, UNEP held two workshops on the sound management of used lead-acid batteries – in Osaka, Japan, in November 2015, and in Guatemala in February 2016. As a follow-up to these workshops, UNEP is preparing a report on the trade and recycling of used lead-acid batteries and the associated environmental and health impacts.

44. Information on techniques for emissions abatement and alternatives to lead and cadmium is provided, as requested in part VI of resolution 1/5, in document UNEA/EA.2/INF/19.

VIII. Waste

45. At its first session the United Nations Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director to consider the interlinkages between chemicals and waste policies in the global outlook on waste prevention, minimization and management.

46. The *Global Waste Management Outlook* was launched on 7 September 2015 at the World Congress of the International Solid Waste Association in Antwerp, Belgium, by the International Environmental Technology Centre, in collaboration with the Association, as a response to UNEP Governing Council decision 27/12 on chemicals and waste management, adopted in February 2013.² The publication provides an authoritative overview, analysis and recommendations with regard to actions, policy instruments and financing models for waste management, as well as the first comprehensive assessment of the state of waste management around the world in the twenty-first century. It sets out the global waste management goals embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and concludes with a global call for action.

47. The *Global Waste Management Outlook* states that there is a clear need to integrate the management of hazardous chemicals with the management of waste in general and hazardous waste in particular. Many products in daily use, such as batteries, cleaners, oils, paints, pesticides and electrical and electronic products, contain hazardous chemicals; the focus recently has been on hazardous waste prevention through measures such as replacement of hazardous materials in products with non-hazardous alternatives. The challenges will be addressed by three key actors, namely national and local government, the private sector and community organizations, through public awareness-raising, institutional and human capacity-building and the development of the necessary environmentally sound facilities.

² <http://www.unep.org/ietc/ourwork/wastemanagement/GWMO>.

48. Work has already begun on the development of regional waste management assessments with the aim of gaining a better understanding of each region's status and needs as a basis for developing tailored recommendations and actions.

IX. Regional centres: mainstreaming and coordinated delivery

49. In section VIII of resolution 1/5, the United Nations Environment Assembly acknowledged the "role of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions to support the implementation of those conventions and all activities, as well as the role that they play in contributing to other chemicals- and waste-related instruments and in mainstreaming the sound management of chemicals and waste". It also requested the Executive Director "to consider opportunities for effective and efficient cooperation with the regional centres in implementing the regional sound management of chemicals and waste projects" and invited the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, GEF and other relevant international financial institutions, instruments and programmes to do likewise.

50. The regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions played an important role in supporting and leading the organization of a number of subregional and regional workshops organized by the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Their support was substantive and effective, and they were invited to participate and share their regional experience and expertise with the workshop participants. A number of centres have continued to play important roles at the regional level in support of regional and national efforts to promote the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention.

51. Furthermore, a project on mercury storage and disposal has been implemented by UNEP in partnership with the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean Region in Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago; and a report on the environmentally sound management of used lead-acid batteries is being prepared in partnership with the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Central America and Mexico.

52. UNEP has identified opportunities to strengthen the regional delivery and involvement of the regional centres in projects on persistent organic pollutant monitoring; on the risks associated with brominated flame retardants; on polychlorinated biphenyl management in the mining sector; on mercury inventories and monitoring; and on the development of national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention. The centres have also played an important role in disseminating tools and methods developed by UNEP.

53. The conferences of the parties to the Basel and Stockholm conventions, at their meetings in May 2015, welcomed the United Nations Environment Assembly's acknowledgement, in resolution 1/5, of the role of the regional centres in supporting the implementation of the two conventions. The two conferences of the parties also considered other elements of resolution 1/5 pertaining to regional centres, as reflected in their decisions BC-12/10 and SC-7/17, respectively.

X. Additional information related to the implementation of resolution 1/5

54. This section of the present report highlights other activities to support the further implementation of resolution 1/5, in addition to those carried out to date.

55. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 underlines the cross-cutting, intersectoral nature of chemicals and waste issues and offers UNEP an opportunity to collaborate with countries, other intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders and to add another dimension to the work of mainstreaming chemicals and waste management into national policies and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

56. Furthermore, several resolutions adopted at the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management address UNEP as a Strategic Approach stakeholder and call for its engagement in several emerging policy issues, in particular chemicals in products, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, lead in paint and environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants.

57. The fact that emerging data show that emissions from lead batteries lead to significant human and environmental lead exposure points to opportunities for further action.

58. Resolution IV/4 of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, on the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, provides an opportunity for UNEP, as a Strategic Approach stakeholder, to foster forward-looking thinking on key issues and possible elements for a future long-term approach to the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste. Together with the 2015 *Global Waste Management Outlook*, the preparation of the second edition of the *Global Chemicals Outlook* scheduled for release in 2018 presents an opportunity for analysis that can feed into the work of the 2018 meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Conference.

59. Sustainable chemistry, another important area that is receiving growing international attention, is a potential game changer in terms of the design, production and use of chemicals. It could contribute significantly to the shaping of future chemicals management, provided that the opportunities and concerns of all countries are taken into consideration, and it also creates an opportunity to link work on chemicals and waste with analysis and action on the advancement of an inclusive green economy and sustainable consumption and production.

60. UNEP, in line with its mandates, is set to scale up its contribution to meeting the 2020 goal. The Chemicals and Waste Branch has recently been restructured with a view to strengthening and advancing the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycles and to furthering progress towards a circular economy. The Chemicals and Waste Branch combines the UNEP mandates of delivering scientific and technical services in the area of chemicals management and facilitating collaboration between the Strategic Approach secretariat, the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the UNEP OzonAction Programme, the International Environmental Technology Centre and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

61. Strengthening partnerships with Governments, the private sector and civil society and advancing results-based management and communication will be the cornerstones of work in the coming years. The strengthened industry involvement in sound chemicals management required under the integrated approach to financing will provide scope for the strengthening of results-based partnerships.

62. It is equally important for UNEP to continue to collaborate ever more closely with other IOMC organizations, the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, GEF and other partners.

63. To ensure that UNEP is able to maintain and increase its efforts and assistance at all levels for the advancement of sound management of chemicals and waste, and to contribute effectively to the implementation of the chemicals- and waste-related conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, will require appropriate resources from a wide variety of funding sources. One example could be the alignment, where appropriate, of the technical support and expertise offered by UNEP with the priorities and resource mobilization capacity of GEF.
