

Draft resolution for a Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution

Submitted by Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay

Version: 13.12.21

Contact: michel.tschirren@bafu.admin.ch

The United Nations Environment Assembly

Recalling resolution 4/8, and *stressing* the urgent need to “strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels to support and promote science-based local, national, regional and global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020”,

Recalling also resolution 5/2, which approved UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2022-2025 with its sub-programme on chemicals and pollution action, alongside those on nature and climate action, and its promotion of sound science and information- and knowledge-sharing,¹

Welcomes the report prepared by the Executive Director in cooperation with the member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals “An assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste”,

Notes the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, “Right to science in the context of toxic substances”,²

Convinced that the availability of advice will enable more timely action, minimise and prevent the adverse effects of

¹ UNEA/EA.5/3/Rev.1

³ A/HRC/48/61

pollution, including chemicals and waste, and can promote sustainable and green chemistry solutions,

Convinced that a science-policy panel could support United Nations agencies, global Multilateral Agreements, other international instruments, such as the beyond 2020 instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste, countries and the private sector in their work to take action on chemicals, waste and pollution by providing authoritative, independent, credible, inclusive, policy-relevant scientific advice on issues,

Agrees that a science-policy panel should be established to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution,

Agrees that the principal functions of the panel should be to:

- (i) undertake horizon scanning, that is a systematic examination of information to identify potential threats, risks, emerging issues and opportunities; and identify issues of concern and provide evidence-based options for solutions to address them;
- (ii) undertake assessments on the nature and scale of particular issues and, where appropriate, potential solutions, and generate outputs that inform all actors, to support them in developing specific instruments or policies; and
- (iii) provide up-to-date and relevant information, catalyse scientific research, ensure communication between scientists and policymakers, translate and disseminate findings for different audience and raise public awareness.

Further agrees that the panel should be an autonomous intergovernmental body; and that the ultimate authority shall rest with Governments to ensure the programme of work delivers policy-relevant evidence from which the global community are able to agree conclusions,

Decides to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group of Governments and regional economic integration organisations, which is open to UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations and stakeholder

representatives, with the terms of reference set out in the Annex to the present resolution,

Recognises the important work of members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, other relevant UN agencies, and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the International Conference on Chemical Management (ICCM) and invites these organizations to further contribute to the sound management of chemicals, waste and other pollutants through the establishment of a science-policy panel,

Requests the Executive Director to cooperate closely with the relevant secretariats of the pollution-related global Multilateral Agreements, and other relevant international organizations such as the World Health Organization, to ensure their involvement in the preparation of the first meeting and encourage further consideration of their roles by their respective governing bodies,

Requests the Executive Director to convene a first meeting of the open-ended working group, and requests the Executive Director to invite the World Health Organization (WHO) to play a role regarding the organization and the content of these meetings,

Invites Governments and others in a position to do so to provide extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of this resolution, in particular to enable the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the open-ended working group,

Requests the Executive Director to provide a secretariat for the open-ended working group and to prepare the analytical and summary reports necessary for its work.

Terms of Reference of the Open-ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution

The working group shall prepare a proposal for the establishment of the panel, making recommendations on:

- (i) the institutional design of the panel, including arrangements for and membership of the plenary as supreme governing body of the panel, and for discharging management oversight of the work through a bureau or steering committee;
- (ii) the relationship with the international policy-making actors involved with the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (iii) the processes for determining the work program and for executing it;
- (iv) arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts;
- (v) procedures for agreeing reports and assessments to be produced by the panel;
- (vi) arrangements for providing secretariat support for the panel, hosted administratively by the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation but placed under the political authority of the panel;
- (vii) proposals for financing the work of the panel;
- (viii) draft rules of procedure;
- (ix) an indicative budget for the panel;
- (x) any other issues which must be addressed in order to complete the proposal.

The open-ended working group should take account of the need to ensure that the panel:

- (i) can deliver outputs which are policy relevant, without being policy prescriptive;
- (ii) is interdisciplinary, ensuring appropriate contributions from experts with different disciplinary expertise, and with geographical, regional and gender balance;
- (iii) has procedures which will ensure the authority, credibility, legitimacy, and transparency of its work;
- (iv) undertakes work which is complementary to and does not duplicate or compromise the work of the UN agencies and the expert subsidiary bodies of existing and future global Multilateral Agreements active in the field of pollution, including the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (v) coordinates with other science-policy bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), and that the working group should draw on the examples and experience of those panels and other relevant science-policy bodies;
- (vi) can address potential conflicts of interest, and the use of commercially sensitive information;
- (vii) has the flexibility to respond to the needs of the community and evolve to meet the functions identified;
- (viii) is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving a high impact.