



SP/EB.7/6  
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English only

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## REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME

### ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The seventh meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was opened by Mr. Reggie Hernaus (Netherlands), outgoing co-chair of the Executive Board, at 13:00 (CEST) on 28 March 2022. Mr. Hernaus welcomed the participants and thanked them for their understanding of the need to hold an online meeting, given the travel restrictions still in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. He then invited Ms. Monika MacDevette, Chief of the Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP's Economy Division, to make some opening remarks
2. In her opening remarks, Ms. MacDevette welcomed the both the new members of the Executive Board and the wide range of observers from UNEP's member states who had expressed interest in the meeting, in addition to the Internal Task Team, comprising representatives of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Conventions, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as representatives from UNEP's regional offices. She noted that the meeting was being held shortly after the recently concluded second session of UNEA 5, at which member states came together, in person and online, overcoming the obstacles and risks posed by the pandemic to make some very important decisions for the environment. These included including adopting a resolution that would set the path to a global treaty to end plastic pollution; laying the groundwork for the establishment of a science-policy panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution, and of course extending the duration of the Special Programme. She described the decision to extend the duration of the Special Programme as significant vote of confidence in what the Special Programme had achieved to date and a commitment to continuing the work in the future. She noted that the resolution contained an operative paragraph directed to the Executive Board itself, which was directly relevant to the preparations for the launch of the sixth round, under consideration by the Board during this meeting. The Board would also be considering applications that were submitted under the fifth round of funding. Wishing the members a fruitful meeting, she assured them that the Secretariat was ready to support them in their ongoing work to take the Special Programme into the next phase.
3. Following the opening remarks, Mr. Hernaus invited the members of the Executive Board to introduce themselves briefly.
4. The meeting was attended by members and/or alternates from all Executive Board constituencies and represented quorum for decision making in accordance with Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure for the Executive Board of the Special Programme.

## **ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

### **2.1 Election of officers**

5. The outgoing co-chair Mr Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) noted that the Terms of Reference of the Special Programme provided that the Executive Board would have two co-chairs, one from recipient countries and one from donor countries, and requested that the donor and recipient countries put forward their nominees for co-chair respectively.
6. The Executive Board elected Ms Kay Williams (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Ms Irma Gurguliani (Georgia) as the co-chairs for the 2022-2024 term. The meeting was adjourned briefly to allow the new co-chairs to be briefed by the Secretariat.

### **2.2 Adoption of agenda and organization of work**

7. The co-chair invited the Board members to consider and adopt the provisional agenda and proposed organization of work as set out in documents SP/EB/7.1/ and SP/EB/7.1/Add.1 respectively.
8. In presenting the proposed organization of work, the co-chair referred to the following provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Special Programme:
  - a. The meeting would be conducted in English only;
  - b. In line with Rule 18, the co-chairs would grant permission to the representatives and observers to speak during the course of the meeting in the order in which they signified their desire to speak, taking into account that observers should normally speak after representatives, unless otherwise decided by the co-chairs;
  - c. With particular reference to agenda item 4 *Consideration of eligible and complete applications for the fifth round of applications*, Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure provide that “In cases where a recipient country that is represented in the Executive Board is involved in a project submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration, the representative of that country shall be excused from decision-making by the Executive Board in relation to the project in question”. The Secretariat would therefore move the Board member(s) concerned into the virtual lobby before the presentation of their respective project and bring them back into the meeting afterward the discussion of that project. The same approach would be used for any observers whose applications would be considered during the meeting, in order to ensure free and open discussion among the Board members on the merits of all the applications; and
  - d. Under Rule 26, the Executive Board shall make every effort to take its decisions by consensus.
9. The agenda and organization of work were adopted as presented, without the addition of any further items under Agenda Item 8, *Any Other Business*.

## **ITEM 3. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE RESUMED SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

10. The Executive Board was invited to consider and approve the report of the resumed sixth meeting of the Executive Board meeting, held online from 1-2 September 2021, as contained in document SP/EB.7/2. The report, which had been circulated for comment by the Board members after the teleconference, was approved without any modifications.

**ITEM 4. CONSIDERATION OF ELIGIBLE AND COMPLETE APPLICATIONS FOR THE FIFTH ROUND OF FUNDING UNDER THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME**

11. Under this agenda item the Executive Board was invited to review and consider the eligible and complete applications submitted under the fifth round of funding, with a view to approving projects that would receive funding.
12. To facilitate the work of the Executive Board, the Secretariat had made available the full application packages submitted by each country, which included application forms, signed endorsement letters, letters of support and additional information, as well as the appraisals undertaken by the Secretariat and the internal task team.
13. The co-chairs of the Executive Board invited the Special Programme Secretariat to provide an overview of the launch and review process for the fifth round of applications and to introduce the background documents (SP/EB.7/3 and its addenda SP/EB.7/3/Add.1, SP/EB.7/3/Add.2 SP/EB.7/3/Add.3 and SP/EB.7/3/Add.4) with a view to assisting the Board in its deliberations on this agenda item.
14. In its presentation the Secretariat indicated that the call for applications had been launched on 7 April 2021. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Secretariat was 7 August 2021. Following the application deadline, the Secretariat received 22 applications, from 22 countries. Each application underwent an initial screening, during which two applications were found to be ineligible and the applicants were informed accordingly; a third application was withdrawn.
15. The remaining 19 applications underwent an in-depth review by the Secretariat with a view to providing comments to the applicants to help strengthen their applications, as appropriate.
16. The Special Programme Secretariat convened two online meetings of the internal task team comprising representatives from the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the SAICM Secretariat and the GEF Secretariat to undertake a review and appraisal of the initial applications received and later the final submissions by the applicants.
17. The appraisal involved a qualitative analysis of each project and a technical review of the activities planned. The appraisal also included a detailed review and assessment of the budget in relation to the proposed activities. After the first round of appraisals, feedback was provided to applicants to enable them to revise and resubmit their applications.
18. The Secretariat and the internal task team ultimately reviewed and appraised 15 eligible and complete applications from 15 countries, as outlined in Annex II, for consideration by the Executive Board. The Secretariat presented the results of the appraisal of each project to the Board.
19. Following the presentation, the co-chairs invited the Executive Board to deliberate on the eligible and complete applications received by the Secretariat for the fifth round of applications.
20. The Board deliberated the merits of each project and provided detailed comments on each application to further strengthen the applications that were approved for funding and provided detailed feedback and guidance to countries whose projects were not approved, with a view to encouraging them to resubmit improved applications in the future.
21. Following its discussion, the Executive Board approved nine projects with budgets amounting to US\$ 2,641,160. The approved projects were selected taking into account the projects' merits, regional balance and priority to countries with least capacity, taking into account the special needs of least development countries and small island developing states, as follows:

**Table 1.** Projects approved under the fifth round of funding

**Africa**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Strengthening Burkina Faso's national capacities for sustainable management of chemicals and hazardous waste
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Strengthening DRC's National capacity to implement the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions including SAICM.
<b>Madagascar</b>	Strengthening preventive, promotional and preparatory health sector interventions for an effective response to chemical events and accidents in Madagascar
<b>Uganda</b>	Strengthening National Capacity to Implement Control Procedures under the Rotterdam, Stockholm Basel and Minamata Conventions in the Republic of Uganda
<b>Zambia</b>	To strengthen institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes in Zambia
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	Strengthening Legal and Institutional Infrastructures for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Zimbabwe

**Central and Eastern Europe**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	Further strengthening of national capacity and risk management of Substances of International Concern throughout their life cycle

**Latin American and the Caribbean**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	Strengthening of national capacities in the environmentally sound management of emerging pollutants and other dangerous substances in Argentina
<b>Belize</b>	Institutional Strengthening of the Department of the Environment for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Belize

**ITEM 5. PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE SIXTH ROUND OF APPLICATIONS**

**Item 5.1 Presentations from the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM**

22. Representatives from each of the Secretariats of the chemicals and waste related instruments and the GEF were invited by the co-chairs to provide the Executive Board with an overview of the outcomes and/or expected outcomes of relevant meetings held by their respective Governing Bodies.
23. Speaking on behalf of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, Mr. Frank Moser congratulated the Special Programme on the approval of projects under the fifth round, noting that they contained many key activities to support implementation of the Conventions. He informed the Board that the face-to-face meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) were scheduled for later in 2022 and that the Special Programme would have the opportunity to present its results to date, although a formal decision on the Special Programme was not anticipated. He confirmed that the Secretariat of the Conventions remained dedicated, through the provision of staff time, to appraise Special Programme projects through multiple lenses. Mr. Moser also highlighted several important aspects of the Special Programme for the Conventions, including increasing coordination at country level and improving responses to information requests, as well as increasing reporting rates in response to parties' obligations under the Conventions, which could be an important metric

for the work of the Special Programme. Building in-country capacity on data collection and capacity to support the updating of national implementation plans, which were a pre-requisite to access funding under the GEF, was crucial. And while ratification of the Conventions was of course a country prerogative, support in this process was also important, as was increasing the capacity of countries, particularly least developed countries and small island developing states, to participate in the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee and Chemical Review Committee. Finally, he underscored the importance of avoiding duplication between Special Programme projects and mandated activities under the three conventions, such as for example plastic work and projects in the context of the Basel Convention Implementation and Compliance Committee. He noted that ensuring harmonization of project activities would increase the co-benefits of the support provided through the different channels.

24. Ms. Marianne Bailey and Ms Claudia Ten Have, speaking on behalf of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, welcomed the good engagement between the Special Programme and the Minamata Convention Secretariat. They provided an overview of outcomes of the recent COP-4 that took place the week before the Executive Board meeting. During that meeting twelve decisions were adopted and Annex A (mercury added products) and Annex B (manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used) to the Convention were reviewed; Annex A was amended to include more products, with consideration of a further four products deferred to COP-5. The meeting also adopted a way forward on the effectiveness evaluation, terms of reference for the review of the financial mechanism, and a decision on gender, among others. In addition, the Bali Declaration on combating the illegal trade of mercury was presented by the Indonesian COP Presidency. Moving to the Minamata Convention's Specific International Programme (SIP), it was noted that in order to ensure that the funded projects are not overlapping but complementary, the Minamata Secretariat was a member of the Internal Task Team reviewing applications submitted under the Special Programme, and the Secretariat of the Special Programme participated in the Cross-Secretariat Task Team reviewing applications submitted under the SIP. The key differences between the SIP and the Special Programme were highlighted: the SIP focuses on capacity building and technical assistance to implement specific obligations of the Minamata Convention and was only open to developing countries and countries with economies in transition that were already a party to the Minamata Convention; while the Special Programme was open as well to countries that were not parties to the Minamata Convention and its focus was on institutional strengthening, with a broader focus across the chemicals and waste conventions and SAICM. A total of 24 projects had been approved in three rounds of funding for the SIP, three of which had already completed their technical activities. Under its third round of applications, the SIP had received more eligible and worthy projects than could be funded, requiring some difficult decisions to be taken by the SIP Governing Board. Nine of the 24 approved projects were in Africa, seven in Asia Pacific, three in Central and Eastern Europe and five in Latin America and the Caribbean. The portfolio included six projects in least developed countries and two in small island developing states. The Secretariat expressed its satisfaction with the participation of countries in the SIP, and noted good cross fertilization of ideas and efforts across the projects.
25. Ms Delfina Cuglievan Wiese explained on behalf of the SAICM Secretariat that the resolution adopted at the resumed fifth session of UNEA on the sound management of chemicals and waste that extended the duration of the Special Programme also specifically referred to including SAICM post-2020 in the Special Programme, emphasising the ongoing importance of the support provided to SAICM through the Special Programme. She outlined the current main activities of the SAICM Secretariat, including a global project on best practices on emerging policy issues of concern under SAICM; development of a capacity building strategy with funding from Health Canada; a project in collaboration with UNEP and other entities on implementation of Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals aimed at fostering industry participation in Africa; and a course on knowledge management of chemicals and waste. She noted some key achievements over the past four years including adoption of legislation by 16 countries; phase out of lead paint, development of six guidance documents and tools and development of a fully functional knowledge platform. The mid-term evaluation of SAICM resulted in an assessment of highly satisfactory. Finally, she mentioned that the fourth meeting of the intersessional process (IP4) would take place in August to September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania, and a series of regional meetings would also take place.
26. Mr. Anil Sookdeo, speaking on behalf of the GEF Secretariat, provided the Executive Board with a summary of the progress towards the GEF 8 replenishment, discussions on which started in December 2020. He explained

that as at the date of the Seventh Executive Board meeting numerous consultations were still taking place, but that the process would be finalized the week after the meeting, with the eighth replenishment itself beginning from July 2022. The need for more resources to support chemicals and waste management had been highlighted by many countries in the discussions, and as a result the allocation for chemicals and waste areas was expected to be increased to between 14 and 15% of the overall replenishment amount. The chemicals and waste strategy in the GEF8 replenishment built on the momentum from GEF 6 and GEF 7 to increase the ambition. GEF 8 included a number of focal areas: creating, strengthening and supporting the enabling environment, prevention of future build-up in the environment, and elimination of hazardous chemicals and waste. Chemicals and waste would also be part of a suite of integrated programmes aiming at higher level of benefits to be achieved to achieve the high ambition. One of these integrated programmes would be specific to chemicals and waste, dealing with elimination of chemicals and waste from supply chains, in the fashion and construction sectors.

27. Following the presentations, the Executive Board expressed their appreciation to the representatives of the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention, SAICM and the GEF for sharing this information with the Board.

### **Item 5.2 Approval of revised application guidelines and forms**

28. The co-chairs of the Executive Board invited the Special Programme Secretariat to present an overview of the updated application guidelines and forms for the sixth round of applications, as outlined in documents SP/EB.7/4/Add.1, SP/EB.7/4/Add.2 and SP/EB.7/4/Add.3. In the presentation, the representative of the Secretariat highlighted the operative paragraph of the recently adopted UNEA resolution extending the duration of the Special Programme, which encouraged the Executive Board to review the procedures for application for funding in the light of the needs and challenges expressed by developing countries, including those related to operating costs, with a view to promoting an effective and efficient application of the eligibility criteria in line with the terms of reference of the Special Programme, without jeopardizing the ability of the Special Programme to receive funding from existing sources.
29. On the issue of the eligibility for funding under the Special Programme, it was recalled that the matter had been discussed at the fifth meeting of the Executive Board, which had considered an information document prepared by the Secretariat exploring eligibility criteria under different funding mechanisms. At that meeting the Board had decided to continue using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients as the determining criterion against which to assess which states would be considered developing countries.
30. The Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of amending the applicant eligibility criteria and agreed to maintain the current eligibility criteria for the sixth round of applications, but to allow for a comprehensive discussion of the implications of the eligibility criteria and any possible changes from the perspective of both donors and applicants. To that end, the Board requested the Secretariat to organise an intersessional meeting, to take place in the last quarter of 2022. The Board also requested the Secretariat to provide an update to the information document that had been prepared for the fifth meeting of the Board, as well as a comparative overview of the different approaches, and to collect and disseminate concerns from donors and recipient countries relating to the eligibility criteria, in order to foster better understanding to inform the discussions going forward.
31. The Executive Board welcomed the updates made to the application documents and requested the inclusion of one additional graphic highlighting the distinction between the Special Programme and the SIP.
32. With regards to the e-learning course that had been launched ahead of the fourth round of applications, the members of the Executive Board reflected positively on the status of implementation of the course and endorsed its update and inclusion of translations to French and Spanish in time for the sixth round of applications.

### **Item 5.3 Timeline for review and appraisal of applications**

33. The co-chairs invited the Secretariat to present the proposed timeline for the submission, appraisal and review of the applications as outlined in document SP/EB.7/3 to assist the Board in its deliberations on this agenda item.
34. Following its deliberations, the Executive Board endorsed the timeline for processing the sixth round of applications, as set out in Annex III.

## **ITEM 6. UPDATE ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME**

### **6.1 Update on Secretariat activities**

35. The co-chairs invited the Secretariat to present an update on the activities of the Secretariat since the last meeting, as outlined in SP/EB.7/5.

#### ***Extension of duration of the Special Programme***

36. The representative of the Secretariat recalled again the recent decision by UNEA to extend the duration of the Special Programme, aspects of which had already been discussed under the previous agenda item. The extension would allow the Special Programme to continue to receive contributions and requests for funding until 2027, and to disburse funds until 2030. This would allow for up to five additional rounds of funding with potentially 118 additional projects funded. This extension was a very strong vote of confidence in the Special Programme, and a mandate to continue the work of the Programme for an additional five years. The Secretariat expressed its congratulations to the Board, the donors and the recipients on a significant achievement.

#### ***Update on the Executive Board***

37. Usually, the Executive Board would meet once per year, in person but owing to the travel restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic, last year the Board held two online meetings instead of one in-person meeting.
38. During the first session of the sixth meeting, held in March 2021, the Board approved 15 projects under the fourth round of funding, with budgets totalling around USD3,7 million. The Board also approved the arrangements for the launch of the fifth round of funding, which culminated in the decisions that were taken during this seventh meeting. In addition, the Board adopted an approach to dealing with long delays in finalizing implementation arrangements for approved projects.
39. During the second session of the sixth meeting, held in September 2021, the Board adopted its recommendation to UNEA to extend the duration of the Special Programme and also adopted amendments to its Rules of Procedure to streamline the nominations process for Board membership.
40. Turning to the membership of the Executive Board, Secretariat noted that the newly constituted Board would serve from 3 February 2022 to 2 February 2024. Nominations had been received for all Board seats; however multiple nominations were received for the Africa seat. Under the amended Rules of Procedure the matter was referred to the chair of the Africa group for mediation. As at the time of the meeting the matter had not yet been resolved, and the Secretariat had engaged with the Governance Affairs Office of UNEP to assist with the process of a secret ballot, if needed, which would be the next step provided for in the amended Rules of Procedure. The Secretariat would inform the Board once the matter was finalized. In the interim, the amended Rules of Procedure provided that the incumbent, in this case Ghana, would continue to serve on the Board until replaced, so that the work of the Special Programme can continue uninterrupted.

#### ***Project implementation status***

41. Turning to the status of project implementation, the representative of the Secretariat noted that Special Programme had 57 projects approved up to and including the fourth round. An overview of progress on these

projects was presented, with more detailed information on each project set out in meeting document SP/EB.7/5. A total of 13 projects had either closed or were in the process of closing; this included the project in Ukraine which had been cancelled. The Secretariat noted that, as a result in particular of the pandemic, there had been quite a large number of extensions, with 18 projects having been granted no-cost extensions by reason, at least in part, of the impact of the pandemic. In line with the guidance provided by the Executive Board, any extension beyond the normal maximum duration of 36 months was submitted to the co-chairs for approval on a case-by-case basis. Most ongoing projects were projected to complete implementation in 2023.

42. The Secretariat highlighted four projects for the Board's consideration:
- a. The project in Afghanistan had made excellent progress, but implementation had been halted by the political changes in the country, which prevented the final remaining activity from being finalized. The project was in the process of closing.
  - b. The project in Brazil, which had been approved under the second round of funding, had not yet had its implementation arrangements finalised. The project focal points had been informed of the Board's policy on delays in finalising implementation deadlines and the applicable deadlines, and the Secretariat was keeping the co-chairs of the Board informed of progress. It was understood that the final obstacles to signing the project agreement were being resolved, which would allow for the agreement to be signed in the coming few months.
  - c. For the project in Nauru, the Secretariat drew the Executive Board's attention to the information note containing a notification from the Secretariat of the Basel Convention concerning the country's compliance status with its obligations under paragraph 3 of Article 13 of the Convention to submit a national report on an annual basis. The project had been impacted by staffing changes; draft reports had been submitted and the Secretariat was working with the focal points to finalise them.
  - d. The project in the Sudan had been approved under the fourth round, and was impacted by the coup in the country October 2021. Discussions on project implementation arrangements had been put on hold in line with advice from UNEP's corporate legal office and the country office, until the situation could be clarified; however the Secretariat had since been informed that the project could go ahead and was working with the country focal points to finalise the implementation arrangements.

#### ***Implementation of the Special Programme Communications Strategy***

43. The co-chairs of the Executive Board invited the Special Programme Secretariat to provide an overview of the status of the implementation of the workplan that has been put in place in collaboration with PCI Media with a view to implementing Phase II of the communications strategy, as outlined in document SP/EB.7/5. The Secretariat recalled that PCI Media had been contracted in mid-August 2020 to facilitate the implementation of Phase II of the Special Programme communications strategy. By December 2021 all phases of the work plan had been completed and the communications products that had been agreed upon had been developed. These included promotional and testimonial videos, a photo bank, blog posts for newly approved projects under the fourth round of applications, three fact sheets on gender, monitoring and evaluation and stakeholder engagement, a comic book and an 'op ed' in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, as well as a series of social media toolkits and a publicity toolkit. The Secretariat also shared information on the launch plan for the use of these newly developed products.
44. Turning to knowledge management, the representative of the Secretariat reported on the launch of the second phase of the Special Programme knowledge management tool. This tool focused on categorizing detailed progress towards activity implementation and the integration of financial data and expenditure status for each project. The tool also showed progress against milestones listed from the individual projects' logframes as reflected in periodic progress reports submitted by the project partners.



***Private sector engagement***

45. The Secretariat delivered a presentation to inform the newly elected Executive Board of guidance provided to the Secretariat by the Board during the second session of its sixth Board meeting, to facilitate preparation of the private sector engagement session to be held in 2022. The Secretariat also presented a draft agenda for that session, set out in Annex IV, along with the results of the survey completed by outgoing members of the Executive Board on the possible participants in and preferred format of the planned meeting. Moving forward, based on the outcomes of the session, the Secretariat would develop an action plan, for approval by the Executive Board, that highlighted links with previous work and identified gaps with a view to providing guidance on best practices, coordination of activities and mapping potential partners in the area of private sector engagement for improved management of chemicals and waste, in collaboration with relevant UNEP partners and the instruments. The Secretariat would also develop guidelines, in accordance with decisions of the Executive Board, to inform national projects of best practice to support the integration of private sector engagement including the development of Public Private Partnerships into Special Programme country projects.
46. The Board welcomed the Secretariat's proposal to recirculate the survey to provide newly elected Board members with an opportunity to express their views and agreed upon a deadline of 30 April 2022 for responses by new Board members. The survey responses received from the Board would be used to finalise the planning for the private sector session. The Board expressed a preference for a hybrid meeting format and agreed that the private sector session should be held prior to the Fourth meeting of the Intersessional Process in Bucharest, Romania on August 27, 2022.

***Monitoring and evaluation***

47. The Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation specialist, who joined the team from August 2021, presented the steps that the Secretariat had taken to date to implement the existing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy and Action Plan, adopted by the Executive Board in October 2020. He mentioned that on 29 and 30 November 2021 a dedicated online training provided information to focal points of projects approved under the first three rounds on the preparation of progress reports. Logframes of the 15 projects approved under the fourth round of funding as well as project applications submitted under the fifth round had been reviewed, with a view to incorporating the Special Programme Core Indicators in order to enhance measurement of progress at the country level.
48. Looking ahead, he noted that the Secretariat would conduct a training in April 2022 for focal points of projects approved under the fourth round on preparing to capture the results of their projects, with a focus on the core indicators. This training would be followed by bilateral meetings with each of the project focal points to finalise the framework for reporting on their core indicators.
49. In addition, the Secretariat was finalising arrangements to undertake an assessment of the closed projects under the Special Programme. This exercise would take stock of what had worked well and identify what could have been improved in the projects. The exercise would also retroactively assess the results of these earlier projects against the core indicators that had been adopted by the Board. The findings and recommendations of this exercise would feed into the Special Programme Secretariat's future work. The target audience for this exercise would be Special Programme Secretariat itself, the Executive Board, the Secretariats of the Instruments, and Governments that had completed or were implementing projects under the Special Programme.

***Study to strengthen implementation of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and the Instruments through Special Programme support***

50. The representative of the Secretariat outlined a study being undertaken by the Secretariat with resources provided by the government of Germany. The study would elaborate a concept on further strengthening the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and of the Instruments through the support provided by the Special Programme. It was being developed in cooperation with and on the basis of the experiences, strategies and supporting tools developed by UNEP and the Secretariats of the relevant MEAs as

well as SAICM and including sectors such as health, protection of workers and pollution prevention as represented by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC).

51. The study would explore best practices in the fields of chemicals and waste, climate and biodiversity, that could contribute to sustainable domestic financing of institutional arrangements built up with support of the Special Programme. The study could include mechanisms such as cost recovery, fiscal measures and Extended Producer Responsibility and IOMC/stakeholder involvement and would provide recommendations to enhance the sustainability of outcomes of current and future Special Programme projects, building on existing resources such as the LIRA guidance and ongoing work undertaken by SAICM on industry engagement.

### *Staffing*

52. The representative of the Secretariat provided a brief overview of Secretariat staffing, noting that all vacant posts in the team arising from staff movements had been filled, along with additional positions that had been approved by the Executive Board. She proposed, in light of the decision to extend the duration of the Special Programme, the addition of one more full-time staff post, that of a G5 Finance and Budget Assistant. This would support the increasing workload of the Secretariat, as the portfolio of projects grew, in reviewing budgets and expenditure reports, in addition to the work related to overall budget management and donor reporting. Given the usual time period for recruitment, this addition would not have budgetary implications before 2023. The annual cost of a G5 staff member was US\$ 106,500.
53. The Executive Board took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the update on operations.

## **6.2 Proposed revised Special Programme budget for 2022**

54. The co-chairs invited the Secretariat to make a brief presentation on the topic. The representative of the Secretariat began by providing an update on the status of contributions to the Special Programme Trust Fund and welcomed Switzerland as a new donor, whose contribution brought the total amount pledged to US\$ 32,8 million. She recalled that the meeting document SP/EB.7/5 had set out in some detail the expenditures as at 31 December 2021, amounting to a total of US\$ 19.1 million comprising total cumulative commitments and expenditures under the Special Programme.
55. The Board in September had approved an indicative budget for 2022, amounting to US\$ 6,3 million, including an estimated amount of US\$ 4,5 million for projects approved under the fifth round. The Secretariat proposed to revise this indicative budget to record the amount approved under the fifth round of funding; to include provision for the first quarter of 2023 ahead of the next meeting of the Board which would take place in early 2023, and to include provision from 2023 for the proposed new G5 Finance and Budget Assistant post for which the Board's approval was requested. The total amount of the proposed revised budget was US\$ 5,277,785.
56. The representative of the Secretariat briefly discussed the cost implications of the recent UNEA decision to extend the duration of the Special Programme. Ahead of the discussions at UNEA, cost estimates had been prepared for the five years of the extension including staffing costs, contributions to the country projects, travel and other costs such as communications and other aspects of the operations of the Secretariat. The cost estimate for the five additional years came to a total of US\$ 42.2million, which was in line with the estimate provided during the last meeting of the Board. She noted that this would require a significant push on resource mobilization and that the resource mobilisation strategy endorsed by the Executive Board at its fifth meeting in October 2019 would be updated accordingly. Work was ongoing with UNEP's resource mobilisation unit and counterparts within UNEP's regional offices to attract new donors among governments as well as to identify possible private foundations that might be interested in supporting the work of the Special Programme. The communications products that had been presented earlier in the meeting would be an enormous asset in this regard. In general, large longer-term contributions spanning three or more years provide the greatest stability, as they could cover the full period of a Special Programme project, however all contributions that are made could be put to good use. Existing donors were, of course, most welcome to continue their generous support.

57. In its discussions, the Executive Board considered the request by the Secretariat for the new staffing post to support the financial aspects of its work. The Board noted that staffing should be assessed not only against the value of the portfolio as a whole but also taking into account the number of projects in the portfolio. The value of individual projects was relatively low, compared to other funding mechanisms; however there were many projects to be managed, that required a hands-on approach by the Secretariat to incorporate the Board's feedback on project applications, resulting in a high workload relative to the value of the fund.
58. The Board agreed to approve the new G5 Finance and Budget Assistant position and also approved the revised budget for 2022 and the first quarter of 2023, as set out in Annex V.

#### **ITEM 7. DATE AND VENUE OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

59. To facilitate the Executive Board's deliberations under this agenda item, the Secretariat gave a brief presentation outlining the tentative agenda items that the Board might wish to consider at the eighth meeting of the Executive Board.
60. The Board agreed to the proposed tentative agenda items provided by the Secretariat and noted that the Secretariat would liaise with the co-chairs on the exact timing and arrangements for the eighth meeting, to be organized in around February 2023, with the intention to hold the meeting in person.

#### **ITEM 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **8.1 Update on the outcomes of UNEA 5.2**

61. The Secretariat gave a brief overview of the outcomes of the resumed fifth session of UNEA, held in Nairobi from 28 February to 2 March 2022 with the theme "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" and of the special session of UNEA held from 3-4 March 2022 on UNEP@50. The two meetings resulted in two declarations, 14 resolutions and one decision, on a number of critical issues to curb pollution and to protect and restore nature worldwide. Final edited versions of all outcomes would be available on the UNEA website.
62. The representative of the Secretariat summarised the two declarations that were adopted, as follows:
- a) The *Ministerial declaration on Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* recognised humanity's failure to date to manage chemicals and waste, a threat that was further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic through widespread use of single-use plastics and disinfectant chemicals; recognised the risk for future pandemics and other health risks if humanity did not overhaul its patterns of interaction with nature by adopting a holistic approach such as [One Health](#); and stressed the urgent need to halt the global decline of biodiversity and the fragmentation of habitats, unprecedented in human history and driven by changes in land and sea use, exploitation of nature, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, invasive alien species and pollution of ocean and fresh water, air and soil.
  - b) The *Political declaration of the UNEA special session to commemorate UNEP@50*, among other things, called for renewed efforts at all levels to enhance implementation of existing obligations and commitments under international environmental law, affirmed the indispensable role of UNEA and of UNEP, renewed support for strengthening the collaboration and cooperation between MEAs and UNEP while respecting their independence and respective mandates, supported the strengthening of UNEP and its regional presence, encouraged ratification and implementation of relevant MEAs, called for enhancement of the provision and mobilization of all types and sources of means of implementation, including capacity-building, technology and financial support, and to promote global partnerships and North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, in order to support developing countries in the implementation of national environmental policies and committed to

further amplifying the mobilization of domestic financial resources, including through enhanced collaboration with the private sector.

63. The representative of the Secretariat summarised the resolutions and decisions adopted by UNEA, as follows:
- a) The resolution on plastic pollution set the path to a global treaty to end plastic pollution. It provided for an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to be convened during the 2nd half of 2022, with the ambition to complete its work by the end of 2024. The new instrument could include both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic. An ad-hoc open-ended working group would convene during the first half of 2022 to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee.
  - b) Three resolutions were adopted relating to Chemicals, Waste and Pollution. One resolution dealt with the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. A further resolution on sustainable nitrogen management aimed at accelerating action to reduce nitrogen waste. The third resolution, on the sound management of chemicals and waste, contained several sections. The first section dealt with the SAICM process beyond 2020 and ICCM. The second section looked at the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste, culminating in the decision to extend the duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the Terms of Reference set out under resolution 1/5, and to include the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 in the Programme. The third section dealt with issues of concern and priorities for further work in this area and the final section made a number of requests to the Executive Director, including to report to the sixth session of UNEA on the progress in implementing the resolution.
  - c) In addition, four resolutions were adopted related to Nature and Biodiversity (on sustainable lake management, nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development, animal welfare-environment-sustainable development nexus and biodiversity and health).
  - d) A further four resolutions dealt with green recovery and circular economy (on sustainable and resilient infrastructure, environmental dimension of a sustainable, resilient and include post COVID-19 recovery, enhancing circular economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production and environmental aspects of minerals and metals management).
  - e) Resolutions and decisions on administrative and organizational matters included a resolution on due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution in accordance with paragraph 3 of article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations; the future of the Global Environment Outlook and arrangements for the sixth session of UNEA, to be held in Nairobi from 26 February to 1 March 2024.
64. The Executive Board took note of the information provided by the Secretariat.

#### **ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

65. Noting that the Secretariat would, as per its usual practice, circulate a draft meeting report for review by the members of the Executive Board, the co-chair thanked the members of the Executive Board, the observers and the Secretariat for their contributions and hard work over the past few days.
66. The meeting was closed at 2.45pm on Friday 1 April 2022.
67. [In line with established practice, a draft report was circulated online among the members of the Executive Board for their comments over a period of two weeks. The Secretariat made the necessary amendments in order to finalize the present report].

**ANNEX I  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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ANNEX II

**LIST OF ELIGIBLE AND COMPLETE APPLICATIONS UNDER THE FIFTH ROUND OF FUNDING CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Africa**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Country Status</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
1	Burkina Faso	Developing Country	Strengthening Burkina Faso's national capacities for sustainable management of chemicals and hazardous waste
2	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Least Developed Country	Strengthening DRC's National capacity to implement the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions including SAICM.
3	Eritrea	Least Developed Country	Country Driven Institutional Strengthening for Promoting an Integrated Approach to Address the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes
4	Guinea	Least Developed Country	Institutional capacity building for the improvement and implementation of the synergy between the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Minamata and SAICM conventions in the Republic of Guinea.
5	Madagascar	Least Developed Country	Strengthening preventive, promotional and preparatory health sector interventions for an effective response to chemical events and accidents in Madagascar
6	Nigeria	Developing Country	Integrated Healthcare Waste Management Project in Nigeria
7	Uganda	Least Developed Country	Strengthening National Capacity to Implement Control Procedures Under the Rotterdam, Stockholm Basel and Minamata Conventions in the Republic of Uganda
8	Zambia	Least Developed Country	To strengthen institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes in Zambia
9	Zimbabwe	Developing Country	Strengthening Legal and Institutional Infrastructures for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Zimbabwe

**Asia Pacific**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Country Status</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
1	Iran	Developing Country	Tailing Management and Engineering of Iran's Lead and Zinc Industries through Pollution Reduction and Reuse Tailings as Construction Materials

**Central and Eastern Europe**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Country Status</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
1	Georgia	Country with economy in transition	Establish of a Poison Control Center (PCC) as an essential infrastructural element of sound chemicals management system and prevention of chemicals exposure and management of poisonings in Georgia

2	Serbia	Country with economy in transition	Further strengthening of national capacity and risk management of Substances of International Concern throughout their life cycle
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**Latin American and the Caribbean**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Country status</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
1	Argentina	Developing Country	Strengthening of national capacities in the environmentally sound management of emerging pollutants and other dangerous substances in Argentina
2	Belize	Developing Country	Institutional Strengthening of the Department of the Environment for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes in Belize
3	Brazil	Developing Country	Chemicals and waste-ocean nexus

ANNEX III

**CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROPOSED ORGANISATION OF WORK AND  
TIMELINES FOR THE LAUNCH AND APPRAISAL OF THE SIXTH ROUND OF  
APPLICATIONS**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Main Actors</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Launch of the call for applications for funding from the Special Programme	Special Programme Secretariat	11 April 2022
Application Deadline for the submission of Project Proposals	Countries	12 August 2022
Acknowledgement of application receipt and information on eligibility and completeness	Special Programme Secretariat	15-19 August 2022
First Meeting of the Internal Task Team	Special Programme Secretariat and Internal Task Team	21-22 September 2022
Applications with comments and suggestions for improvement sent back to countries for their review	Special Programme Secretariat	3-7 October 2022
Deadline for the resubmission of final applications taking into account the comments made by the Secretariat and the Internal Task Team	Countries	28 October 2022
Second Meeting of the internal Task Team	Special Programme Secretariat and Internal Task Team	21-22 November 2022
Documents submitted to the Executive Board for their consideration	Special Programme Secretariat	Mid-January 2023
<b>Eighth Meeting of the Executive Board is convened</b>	<b>Members of the Executive Board</b>	<b>Mid-February 2023</b>
Decisions of the Executive Board on approved applications are communicated to countries	Special Programme Secretariat	February 2023

**ANNEX IV**

**DRAFT AGENDA OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT SESSION TO BE HELD IN 2022**

<b>Private Sector Session 2022 Draft Agenda</b>
<b>Morning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome and Opening remarks</li><li>• Session overview</li><li>• Presentation by UNEP Private Sector Unit</li><li>• Country presentations to highlight PPP in SP Projects</li><li>• Presentation by SAICM Consultants on study findings</li></ul>
<b>Afternoon</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations by Donors</li><li>• Presentations by Private Sector representatives</li><li>• Discussion of shared challenges related to PPP<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ break-out groups?</li></ul></li><li>• Discussing PPP challenges and modalities for working together</li><li>• Mapping resources to implement joint activities and partnerships</li><li>• Putting it all together: Prioritizing activities and next steps</li></ul>

**ANNEX V**

**APPROVED REVISED BUDGET FOR 2022 AND FIRST QUARTER OF 2023**

	<b>Personnel Costs</b>	<b>Contractual Services</b>	<b>Travel</b>	<b>IP-Direct</b>	<b>Operating Costs</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2023 - Q1</b>	<b>TOTAL REVISED BUDGET 2022- Q1 2023</b>
Output 1: Management of the Special Programme	15,000	45,000	90,000	0	100,000	250,000	62,500	312,500
Output 2: Technical assistance	120,000	0	0	2,641,160	0	2,761,160	0	2,761,160
Output 3: Communications	0	240,000	15,000	0	0	255,000	20,000	275,000
Output 4: Monitoring	80,000	55,000	50,000	0	0	185,000	46,250	231,250
Evaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staff costs	1,297,000	0	0	0	0	1,297,000	350,875	1,647,875
<b>TOTAL (NET)</b>	<b>1,512,000</b>	<b>340,000</b>	<b>155,000</b>	<b>2,641,160</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>4,748,160</b>	<b>479,625</b>	<b>5,227,785</b>