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**Ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel
to contribute further to the sound management of
chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution
First session**

Nairobi, 6 October 2022 and Bangkok, 30 January–3 February 2023*

**Report of the first part of the first session of the ad hoc
open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to
contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and
waste and to prevent pollution**

I. Opening of the session

1. On 2 March 2022 the United Nations Environment Assembly, in its resolution 5/8, decided that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution. The Environment Assembly also decided to convene, subject to the availability of resources, an ad hoc open-ended working group that would begin its work in 2022, with the ambition of completing it by the end of 2024. Accordingly, the first part of the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution was held on Thursday, 6 October 2022 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi. The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with some participants attending online.
2. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. by Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Economy Division, UNEP.
3. Opening statements were made by Ms. Aggarwal-Khan on behalf of Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, and by Maria Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, World Health Organization (WHO), on behalf of Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO.
4. Ms. Aggarwal-Khan, welcoming representatives to the session, said that it was the start of an ambitious process during which the ad hoc open-ended working group would, over the next two years, work to establish a robust process for developing, accessing and using scientific data to better understand the impact of the chemicals and waste sector on planetary and human health. In conjunction with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the new panel would help to tackle the global crisis of pollution while also contributing to addressing the crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and to safeguard the planet for future generations. The experience of IPCC and IPBES, among others, had demonstrated the need to harness the full spectrum of knowledge from social, economic and traditional scientific disciplines, including local and indigenous knowledge.

* The first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution is being held in two parts. The first part of the session was held in Nairobi on 6 October 2022, while the second part, namely the resumed first session, will be held in person in Bangkok from 30 January to 3 February 2023.

In its work, the new body would need to factor in the disproportionate impact of the previously mentioned global crises on vulnerable groups, as well as their gender-related impact. It was also important that the interdisciplinary nature of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 remain the driving force behind the process: with all sectors – governments, industry, academia, civil society and technical agencies – working together, the ad hoc open-ended working group could make the new panel a success and leave the world a cleaner, safer and less polluted place for future generations.

5. Ms. Neira, in her statement, said that avoidable environmental risks to health accounted for 14 million deaths every year and one quarter of the global burden of disease, including more than 60 per cent of non-communicable diseases. Although most global environmental agreements and processes recognized threats to health as a major concern, additional action was needed to address health in a meaningful way. WHO, as the leading international authority setting norms and standards for promoting and protecting health, welcomed the initiation of the process to establish the new science-policy panel, as protecting people from unhealthy environments was a key priority. WHO had recently updated its *Compendium of WHO and Other UN Guidance on Health and Environment*, which the meeting participants were invited to consult. WHO advocated making information on the cost-effectiveness of interventions more readily available; stimulating innovative research, including at the operational and policy-relevant levels; and conducting strategic scientific assessments that addressed gaps. It was important not only to acknowledge the scientific basis for the health effects of chemicals, waste and pollutants but to adopt a collaborative and cross-cutting approach in order to maximize co-benefits for the environment and health and avoid unintended negative consequences. Strengthening the science-policy interface would stimulate much-needed preventive action to protect human health and the environment.

II. Election of officers

6. Introducing the item, Ms. Aggarwal-Khan said that the following individuals had been nominated to serve on the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended working group: Cyrus Mageria (Kenya) and Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali) on behalf of the African States; Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan) and Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific States; Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Valentina Sierra (Uruguay) on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Gudi Alkemada (Netherlands) and Michel Tschirren (Switzerland) on behalf of the Western European and other States. In addition, four nominees had been proposed to represent the group of Eastern European States, but none had been endorsed by the group. As there were more candidates than seats, it had been agreed to postpone the election of the Bureau members from that group until the resumed first session in 2023.

7. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed support for the election of Ms. Alkemada as Chair of the ad hoc open-ended working group, but another representative objected to the election of Ms. Alkemada as Chair and as a member of the Bureau. Several representatives voiced disappointment with the objection. One, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that it was unprecedented for a Member State to object to a Bureau nomination endorsed by a regional group, and that such an objection could undermine the spirit of multilateralism underlying progress in international environmental affairs. Several representatives characterized the objection as politicization of the election process and as a bad precedent, and one urged participants to seek consensus and avoid resorting to a vote on the matter.

8. Given the objection made and the hybrid nature of the meeting, which hampered the holding of a secret ballot to elect a Chair, the participants agreed to postpone the election of the Chair until the resumed first session in 2023.

9. The ad hoc open-ended working group elected the following officers:

Vice-Chairs: Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda)

Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq)

Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali)

Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan)

Michel Tschirren (Switzerland)

Valentina Sierra (Uruguay)

Rapporteur: Cyrus Mageria (Kenya)

It was agreed that Ms. Syedah would chair the meetings of the session pending the election of a Chair at the resumed first session.

III. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

A. Adoption of the rules of procedure of the ad hoc open-ended working group

10. Introducing the sub-item, the Chair recalled that the ad hoc open-ended working group had been established as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and that the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, as outlined in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/2, therefore applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the group's work.

11. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for the application of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly to the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group. One, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, nevertheless recalled that, pursuant to paragraph 5 of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, the ad hoc open-ended working group was required to develop separate rules of procedure for the science-policy panel. Another, recalling that rule 49 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly required decisions to be made by a majority of the members present and voting, stressed that efforts should nevertheless be made to build consensus, with voting regarded as a last resort. Also recalling rule 70 on observers from international non-governmental organizations, he noted that paragraph 7 of resolution 5/8 stated that the panel should be open to representatives of stakeholder organizations with a focus other than the environment.

12. Responding to the comments made, and to a request from the representative of the European Union regarding that body's status as a regional economic integration organization, a representative of the secretariat confirmed that the sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group would be governed by the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, with no changes, and that, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 5/8, the European Union was considered to be a full member of the ad hoc open-ended working group, but without the right to vote.

13. The open-ended working group agreed to adopt the rules of procedure as outlined in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/2.

B. Adoption of the agenda

14. In considering the sub-item, the ad hoc open-ended working group had before it the provisional agenda (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1(I)/1) and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1(I)/1/Add.1).

15. The ad hoc open-ended working group adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure of the ad hoc open-ended working group;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organizational matters.
4. General statements.
5. Options for the timetable and organization of work of the ad hoc open-ended working group.
6. Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the session.
9. Closure of the session.

C. Organization of work

16. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to organize its work as outlined in the annotated provisional agenda and in the scenario note (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1(I)/2).

D. Attendance

17. Representatives of the following Member States attended the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen.

18. The European Union was also represented.

19. The State of Palestine was represented as an observer.

20. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, secretariats of other intergovernmental organizations, and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements attended: Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Central Europe (BCRC Slovakia); Economic Commission for Europe; secretariat of 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; secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury; secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme; secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; UNEP; United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

21. Representatives of the following other international organizations attended: European Union, International Labour Organization, International Copper Study Group, International Lead and Zinc Study Group, International Nickel Study Group, World Health Organization.

22. Representatives of the following non-governmental, industry, academic and other entities attended: Action Group on Erosion, Africa Climate and Environment Foundation, AKO Foundation, All-China Environment Federation, Amnesty International Kenya, Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe, Association for Promoting Sustainability in Campuses and Communities, Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment, Center for International Environmental Law, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, Comparatively for Tanzania Elites Community Organizers, Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), Ecological Restoration, Emirates Environmental Group, Emony Yefwe International, Endocrine Society, Environmental Ambassadors, Environmental and Social Development Organization, ETC Group, European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), European Environmental Bureau, Force Juvénile pour un Avenir Rassurant (FOJAR), Global Alliance on Health and Pollution, Global Dairy Platform Inc., Greenpeace International, Hamraah Foundation, Hazardous Waste Europe, Health and Environment Justice Support, Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, International and Comparative Law Research Center, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Council of Chemical Associations, International Council on Mining and Metals, International Development Research Centre, International Institute for Sustainable Development, International Movement for Advancement of Education Culture Social and Economic Development, International Pollutants Elimination Network, International Solid Waste Association, Journalists for Human Rights, Juventud Unida en Acción, Major Group for Children and Youth, Marine Ecosystems Protected Area Trust, Minderoo Foundation, MDG Achievement Fund, Ocean Foundation, Partnerships for Change, Pesticide Action Network – Africa, Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation, Pure Earth (formerly Blacksmith Institute), Race for Water Foundation, Recycling Partnership, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sauvons le climat (Save the Climate), Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, Soroptimist International, Syracuse University, United States Council for International Business, Welfare Togo, Women's Environment and Development Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Youth for Action.

IV. General statements

23. General statements were made by representatives of the following Member States and a regional economic integration organization: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia (on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States), Democratic Republic of the Congo, European Union, France, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

24. Statements were also made by representatives of the secretariats of 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; the Minamata Convention on Mercury; the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

25. Further statements were made by representatives of the Center for International Environmental Law; the Conflict and Environment Observatory; Ecological Restoration; the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution; Hazardous Waste Europe; Health and Environment Justice Support; the International Council of Chemical Associations; the International Copper Study Group; the International Lead and Zinc Study Group; the International Nickel Study Group; the International Pollutants Elimination Network; Pure Earth; the Royal Society of Chemistry; the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry; and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

26. Many representatives began by thanking the secretariat for organizing the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, with some also thanking the donors that had provided funding for the current meeting, namely (in the order of receipt of their contribution) the Governments of Switzerland, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Representatives welcomed the participation of representatives of other intergovernmental bodies, and in particular WHO, in the meeting.

27. Appreciation was widely expressed for Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 and for the initiation of the process of implementing the resolution. Many speakers said that the new panel would be an important complement to IPCC and IPBES in tackling the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

28. All those who spoke outlined their vision for the new panel. Many, echoing the text of the resolution, characterized it as an independent, intergovernmental body providing policymakers with policy-relevant scientific advice without prescribing policy outright, with the goal of informing decision-making and enabling governments to minimize the adverse effects of the unsound management of chemicals, waste and pollution. Many stressed the importance of engaging a broad range of actors from various sectors and all regions, including Indigenous Peoples, and women and girls, in the work of the panel. Two participants speaking on behalf of observer entities stressed that the possibility of political considerations that could prevent action should be borne in mind when developing the panel. One observer noted that many of the relevant actors were not currently involved with United Nations bodies and their participation could be enabled through the accreditation process. All representatives of observer entities who spoke expressed their willingness to support and contribute to the work of the panel.

29. Several representatives highlighted aspects of the panel's work that they considered important, such as gathering, synthesizing, and disseminating scientific information and analyses; providing the best practices and advice available at any given time by, for instance, reporting trends in global chemical production and use; identifying emerging hazards and risks; providing assessments of response options and the potential for innovation and technological development; and addressing legacy issues still plaguing the lives and environments of communities around the world. Several representatives welcomed the prospect of scientific consensus on important questions relating to chemicals, waste and preventing pollution. One observer suggested that the panel focus exclusively on chemicals and waste in order to be effective, as the sources, actions and policies related to pollution were diverse and complex.

30. A number of representatives highlighted the need to take socio-economic realities into account and seek to balance the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In that regard, several representatives called for a strong focus on supporting developing countries in overcoming the technical and technological capacity obstacles to the sound management of chemicals and waste.

31. Individual representatives cited various other expectations for the work of the panel, including that it would support countries in their efforts to implement multilateral environmental agreements and other international instruments; that it would facilitate the exchange of information; that it would engage with work conducted by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; that it would encourage research into the health and ecological burden of conflict pollution; that its scope would include air pollution; and that it would account for the impact of chemicals throughout their life cycle in order to be in a position to address unforeseen issues.

32. Individual representatives also cited elements that they considered important for the panel to be able to fulfil its functions, including clear functions and objectives that enabled the development of work programmes focused on key priorities; transparent criteria for the definition of its programmatic priorities and rules of procedure; balanced representation of the scientific and academic world of the global South in the theoretical formulation of emerging priorities; provision for the delivery of statements by international non-governmental organizations participating as observers, in line with rule 70 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly; a robust conflict-of-interest policy in order to ensure the integrity of science; a solid procedure for receiving and assessing requests and proposals; and effective communication channels to ensure that findings were shared with the broadest possible audience.

33. Many representatives highlighted the need for efficiency. It was suggested that the panel should avoid duplication of effort and resources by building on the work already done under relevant multilateral agreements and other international instruments and by intergovernmental bodies conducting scientific activities relating to the management of chemicals and waste, and that it should work in collaboration with existing structures.

34. The matter of the panel's funding was raised by several representatives, who called for sufficient and predictable funding, to be provided in particular by developed countries, to ensure the effective functioning of the panel. Several representatives called for adequate funding for participation by delegations from developing countries in the in-person sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group to ensure balanced participation by all regions in the group's work.

35. Regarding the organization of the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group, many representatives said that they supported the proposal to hold two additional sessions in addition to the resumed first session, with the aim of completing the group's work by 2024, as mandated under the provisions of resolution 5/8. One representative suggested that at least one additional session be held. Several expressed disappointment that the group had thus far failed to elect a full Bureau or a Chair, owing to the objection of one Member State, which would hamper the process of establishing the new panel.

36. Regarding the proposals to be developed by the ad hoc open-ended working group, most of those who spoke were in favour of clustering the elements listed in paragraph 5 of resolution 5/8 as proposed in the scenario note for the meeting. However, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, offered suggestions for specific adjustments in that context, including considering the name of the panel only once its scope, functions, institutional design and governance had been clarified. One representative proposed the addition of a fifth thematic area, namely the procedure for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the panel, which, he said, would be critical for global acceptance of the panel's final products. Several noted the existing models provided by IPCC and IPBES, on which the ad hoc open-ended working group could draw in developing its proposals.

37. With respect to the preparations for the resumed first session, some representatives were in favour of intersessional consultation meetings, while another, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that she did not see the need for such meetings. Several representatives, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that the secretariat provide information on potential elements of the new panel and its work to facilitate the discussions at the resumed session. Several representatives, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, supported the proposal to gather stakeholders' views on the scope of the new panel through an online survey, but the representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that a survey would not suffice to identify gaps in knowledge, and that the secretariat should provide additional information regarding possible options for the scope of the panel and regarding the involvement of relevant actors, bodies, instruments and processes to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of work. She cautioned against duplicating work being carried out on the framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, the forthcoming international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution,

including in the marine environment, and other relevant processes, and requested the secretariat to take that consideration into account in preparing the documents for the resumed first session.

38. The representative of France announced that his Government would contribute €150,000 in 2022 to support the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group. He urged those in a position to do so to also provide financial support.

39. Many representatives underscored their Governments' desire to engage fully and productively in the process of establishing the new panel.

V. Options for the timetable and organization of work of the ad hoc open-ended working group

40. Introducing the agenda item, the representative of the secretariat presented an overview of the proposed timetable for the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group, underlining the intention that the work remain collaborative, consultative and inclusive in nature. Consultations with regional groups and major groups and stakeholders would be held, where possible, in the margins of already scheduled meetings of other relevant bodies. The proposed subsequent sessions would be held approximately 8 to 10 months apart to allow for the production of high-quality substantive documents and their translation into all six official languages of the United Nations. The resumed first session would take place from 30 January to 3 February 2023 in Bangkok, with the second session likely to be held in October 2023 and the third in the second half of 2024. The intergovernmental meeting to review the options prepared by the ad hoc open-ended working group and establish the panel could then be held approximately five months after the third session, either very late in 2024 or very early in 2025, bearing in mind the stated ambition in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 for the ad hoc open-ended working group to complete its work by the end of 2024.

41. Turning to the subject of resources, the representative of the secretariat noted that major in-person meetings were expensive to hold, with up to \$1.5 million required for each one, and that, while there were currently sufficient resources for the resumed first session, that was not the case for the second and third sessions. Member States should therefore consider providing additional funding if they were in a position to do so. The secretariat also planned to continue its series of related webinars, an efficient and cost-effective way of reaching a wide range of stakeholders. The second webinar, held on 5 October 2022, had been very successful, allowing representatives of related entities, namely IPBES, IPCC, the International Resource Panel, the secretariat of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and WHO, to share experiences and lessons learned. The secretariat also intended to conduct a series of surveys, with the first survey supporting preparatory work to help define the scope, functions and rules of procedure of the panel and ensure stakeholder engagement.

42. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for holding three in-person sessions according to the timetable outlined by the secretariat. One representative said that, judging by previous experience, an additional session would be required to ensure that the working group fulfilled its mandate. With regard to timing, one representative expressed concern regarding the proposal to hold the second session in October 2023, as other related meetings had already been scheduled for that month. Another representative said that the intergovernmental meeting should be held before the end of 2024, in accordance with the ambition stated in resolution 5/8.

43. Several representatives said that the structures of IPCC and IPBES should serve as models for that of the new panel.

44. Regarding the organization of future work, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that there was no need for intersessional work or regional group meetings in the lead-up to the resumed first session of the ad hoc open ended working group. She stressed the need to avoid duplication of work across bodies. In response to a request by another representative for the secretariat to provide, for the resumed first session, a thorough review of potential specific issues and of existing activities of other bodies relating to chemicals, waste and preventing pollution, the representative of the secretariat said that such a mapping exercise was already under way and that additional input in that regard would be sought from participants in the process. Regarding documentation, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that there should be a focus on producing a robust set of documents for the resumed first session, with another emphasizing the importance of making the documents available to participants as soon as possible. One representative questioned whether there would be enough time to incorporate the outcomes of the current meeting and the findings of the proposed survey into the meeting documents. Another

representative suggested that the survey be administered once the meeting documents had been issued, and a third proposed that the survey, to avoid confusion, focus solely on the scope of the panel's work.

45. The representative of the secretariat said that the document production process had already begun and that, while the schedule would be tight, he was confident that the targets could be met, especially as the main documents would be supplemented by a number of information documents that could be finalized slightly later because they would not be formally edited or made available in languages other than English.

46. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressing appreciation to those Member States that had contributed to the funding of the first session, urged Member States and other stakeholders in a position to do so to consider providing funding a process that would benefit all. One representative called on any stakeholders whose sector could support the panel with resources or expertise to submit such information, highlighting any potential conflicts of interest.

47. Several representatives said that the fees for the conference services secured by the secretariat were high. Several others highlighted the environmental, health and budgetary advantages of holding meetings, including regional consultations, in a hybrid format permitting full, interactive online participation. The representative of the secretariat replied that, unfortunately, the fixed cost of meetings could not be negotiated and that hybrid meetings that were fully interactive for all would, because of their technical requirements, cost more. Although streaming would be available for the resumed first session, the meeting would not be fully interactive for online participants.

VI. Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

48. Introducing the item, the Chair invited participants to consider options for clustering the issues set out in paragraph 5 of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 to facilitate discussions on the organization and possible scope of work of the science-policy panel. She recalled that consideration of the issue of scope would also be informed by the results of the intersessional survey to be conducted among Member States. Participants were invited to recommend further work to be undertaken by the secretariat or the Bureau before the resumed first session. Such work could, for example, involve regional consultations, online webinars or dedicated consultations, possibly in the margins of other relevant meetings.

49. The representative of the secretariat presented the proposed list of working documents for the resumed first session, which included options for the name and scope of the panel; for principal functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements; and for rules, policies and procedures, as well as a programme of work and budget for the panel. He noted that all the topics to be covered were interlinked. Owing to the tight overall timeline and the divergence of initially expressed views concerning the panel, it would be necessary to start work on all elements as soon as possible, including defining the terms "chemicals", "waste" and "pollution" in the context of the panel and mapping existing structures related to chemicals, waste and pollution in order to help decide on the principal functions and scope of work of the panel.

50. He noted that there had been support for using the rules of procedure of existing panels, either fully or in part, as models for those of the new panel, and that the lessons learned from those panels would be presented for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group. In addition, "horizon scanning", which was not an element covered by existing panels, would need to be defined, and experience within UNEP of the horizon scanning process in other contexts could support that work.

51. Key considerations for the work timetable and budget of the ad hoc open-ended working group were to ensure that the three planned sessions and any regional consultations were held and that a standing secretariat was established to ensure the future viability of the process, including the production of high-quality documents.

52. In the ensuing discussion, in relation to the clustering of the issues, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, while agreeing broadly with the clustering proposed, said that there was some overlap that the secretariat could resolve and that a stepwise approach to discussions should be adopted, with the scope, followed by the functions, of the panel being established before institutional design and rules of procedure were considered. Another representative stressed the importance of starting with consideration of the programme of work and budget of the panel. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed the view that deciding on the name of the panel was not currently a priority.

53. Several representatives underlined the importance of the proposed mapping exercise to identify gaps and avoid duplication of work, and one representative highlighted the value of making the document containing the lessons learned by other panels available to participants before the resumed first session. Another said that the programme of work and budget of the panel should be discussed by the assembly of the panel, once it had been established, but that the ad hoc open-ended working group should discuss the process for agreeing on the programme of work and budget.

54. The representative of the secretariat, acknowledging the benefits of a stepwise approach and confirming that the documentation on scope and functions prepared for the resumed first session would be more comprehensive than that for other areas, said that there were advantages to having the flexibility to begin working on other parts of the process. As the time available was limited and different people would work on different areas, preparatory work could begin on the rules of procedure – for example, by identifying which elements could be modelled on existing examples and which would require further consideration. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, maintained that a stepwise approach would be more efficient and productive, and one said that it was important for the Bureau to consider the list of documents proposed by the secretariat before further work took place.

55. With regard to the scope of the panel, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the panel should aim to synthesize relevant information for policymakers to support the identification of new and emerging issues of global concern, including gaps in knowledge and opportunities. The panel should undertake assessments relating to chemicals, waste and pollution and provide risk-management options relevant for policymakers and stakeholders, without prescribing policy. It should work with IPCC and IPBES to address the triple planetary crisis and ensure the involvement of all relevant actors and stakeholders. Another representative said that the panel should also include the production of science by experts from developing countries in order to address the specific challenges faced by those countries and to strengthen the legitimacy and efficacy of the panel. A third stressed the importance of taking into account scientific information provided by various countries when considering policy, and of establishing subsidiary panels to ensure that the scope of the new panel, which would likely be broad, was covered effectively. One representative said that the panel itself should decide what it would assess in relation to chemicals, waste and pollution, and that the ad hoc open-ended working group should therefore ensure that the scope remained as broad as possible, while also proposing a sound prioritization procedure for the work of the panel. The programme of work, once agreed on, would allow for setting priorities and ensuring focus on key issues.

56. One observer said that, as children and youth were disproportionately affected by toxic waste and pollution, it was vital for their input to be sought through initiatives such as online intersessional consultations, targeted workshops, the establishment of a youth advisory group and funded participation of youth representatives in future sessions.

VII. Other matters

57. No other matters were considered.

VIII. Adoption of the report of the session

58. The ad hoc open-ended working group adopted the report of the first part of its first session on the basis of the draft report set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/(I)/L.1, on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be entrusted to the Rapporteur, working in consultation with the secretariat.

IX. Closure of the session

59. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the session was adjourned at 5.50 p.m. on Thursday, 6 October 2022.