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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

**Draft report of the second 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**

**Introduction**

1. On 2 March 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, in resolution 5/8, decided that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to 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.

**I. Opening of the session**

2. 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 first session was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi on Thursday, 6 October 2022, in a hybrid format. The second part of the first session was held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, from 30 January to 3 February 2023, as a fully in-person meeting.

3. The meeting was opened at 10.40 a.m. by Ulf Björnholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies, Governance Affairs Office, UNEP.

4. Mr. Björnholm conveyed the apologies of Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan), Vice-Chair of the ad hoc open-ended working group, who had served as acting Chair at the first part of the first session and was unable to attend the current meeting due to unavoidable circumstances. Upon the recommendation of the Bureau at its meeting of 29 January 2023, Valentina Sierra (Uruguay), Vice-Chair of the ad hoc open-ended working group, had been invited to serve as acting Chair at the second part of the first session, pending the election of the Chair.

5. Expressing gratitude for the confidence placed in her, Ms. Sierra said that, having delivered general statements regarding their views on and vision for the possible structure of the new science-policy panel at the first part of the first session, participants now faced the work of deciding on important details, such as the panel's substance. She therefore urged delegates to use their time productively and efficiently so as to fulfil the mandate set out for the working group in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, which was to prepare proposals for the science-policy panel with regard to its scope, principal functions, rules of procedure and operating principles, among other things.

6. Opening statements were delivered by Pinsak Suraswadi, Director General of the Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand (via pre-recorded video statement), on behalf of Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand; Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP, on behalf of Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP; and Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO) (via pre-recorded video statement).

7. In his opening statement, Mr. Suraswadi stressed that the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which had posed unprecedented challenges with regard to health, the economy and the environment, presented the international community with an opportunity to build a greener and healthier world and to become more resilient in the face of existing and future crises. An intergovernmental science-policy body was required to engage with various stakeholders, including the scientific community and policymakers, to provide the knowledge and tools necessary to inform decision-making on issues related to chemicals, waste and pollution. The resumed first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group therefore provided a timely opportunity to discuss how scientific data, information and assessments could enable more effective and efficient action to minimize the adverse impacts of chemicals and waste management, and to prevent pollution.

8. Ms. Aggarwal-Khan, welcoming representatives to the session, said that chemicals played a vital part in daily life, in areas such as transport, construction and food production. However, inadequate and poor management of the waste produced at the end of chemicals' life cycles was leading to increasing pollution of land, water and air. The ad hoc open-ended working group could draw on the experience of bodies established under various multilateral agreements related to chemicals and waste. Since the scope of the science-policy panel could potentially be very broad, care should be taken to avoid duplicating the work of those bodies and to ensure added value. Its functions, which might include horizon-scanning and conducting environmental assessments, would have an impact on the scope; decisions would need to be made as to what issues the panel would address and what its priorities would be. The consideration of political, economic and health-related aspects of chemicals and waste and incorporating knowledge from local and Indigenous communities would boost the relevance of the panel's work for policymakers, especially in areas such as air pollution, where the science was well established. Transparency, objectivity and close cooperation with the chemical industry and civil society would be key to the panel's success.

9. Mr. Ghebreyesus said that every year 13 million people died as a result of known environmental hazards, including air pollution and exposure to chemicals, and that number would continue to increase as a result of climate change and biodiversity loss. To support countries in addressing those threats, WHO and other United Nations bodies had published a compendium of 500 actions for creating healthier environments. Unfortunately, implementation had been slow and there was a need to strengthen research highlighting the cost-effectiveness and benefits of those actions. The panel could make a real difference by adopting a strategic approach that built on the work of other processes and by identifying opportunities to innovate with a focus on prevention. The challenges posed by chemicals and waste could be tackled only through joint action by the public and private sectors, international agencies and civil society.

## II. Election of officers

10. Introducing the item, the acting Chair recalled that the following individuals had been elected to serve as Vice-Chairs of the Bureau of the first session: Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda); Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq); Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali); Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan); Michel Tschirren (Switzerland); and Valentina Sierra (Uruguay). In addition, Cyrus Mageria (Kenya) had been elected to serve as Rapporteur. The acting Chair also recalled that, during the intersessional period, Qadoori Jabir (Iraq) had resigned and had been replaced by Jinhui Li (China), who had been elected by means of a silence procedure, in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

11. Also recalling that the ad hoc open-ended working group had agreed to postpone the election of its Chair until the resumed first session, the acting Chair proposed that the group proceed with the election of the Chair.

12. One representative asked for the election to be postponed to a later stage in the current meeting or, alternatively, for it to be held by secret ballot.

13. Another representative noted that important decisions had been made during the first part of the first session, notably on the rules of procedure and election of officers, even though the meeting had been held in hybrid format, and that some Member States had been unable to participate fully online. He also sought clarification regarding the silence procedure conducted during the intersessional

period, noting that his Government, including the national focal point for the process of establishing a science-policy panel and his alternate, had not received any communication in that regard.

14. The UNEP Legal Officer, addressing the comment regarding decisions made during the first part of the first session, explained that hybrid meetings were a relatively new phenomenon in the United Nations, having emerged in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fifth session of the Environment Assembly having been initially convened in hybrid format and having been regarded as a legally constituted intergovernmental meeting of the Assembly, the secretariat was of the view that intergovernmental meetings convened in hybrid format were legally constituted intergovernmental meetings. The first part of the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group had been held in hybrid format, as indicated in the report of the meeting (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/3), and it was therefore considered to have been validly constituted.

15. The representative of UNEP, responding to the query regarding the silence procedure, said that the election of the replacement member had been conducted in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, which applied *mutatis mutandis* to the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group as a subsidiary organ of the Assembly. Thus, a letter dated 19 December 2022 had been sent to all the Member States, informing them that the secretariat had received a note verbale from the High Commission of Pakistan stating that the group of Asia-Pacific States, of which Pakistan was the current Chair, had nominated Jinhui Li (China) to replace Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq). As no objection to the nomination had been received by the deadline of 18 January 2023, Mr. Li was considered duly elected.

16. The acting Chair invited the participants to elect a candidate from the Western European and other States as the Chair of the ad hoc open-ended working group by secret ballot, in accordance with rules 56 and 57 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly.

17. At the invitation of the acting Chair, the representatives of Brazil, Malawi and Saudi Arabia acted as tellers.

18. A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Number of ballot papers:	111
Number of valid ballots:	109
Abstentions:	21
Number of members voting:	88
Required majority:	45
Number of votes obtained:	
Gudi Alkemade (Netherlands)	88

19. Having obtained the required majority, Ms. Alkemade was elected Chair of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

20. The Chair recalled that two seats for the Eastern European States remained vacant in the Bureau, and that four Member States from among those States had presented individual nominees, none of whom had been endorsed by the Eastern European States to date.

21. Following further consultations within the regional group and at the group's request, to allow for additional regional consultations, the ad hoc open-ended working group decided to postpone the election of the Bureau members from the Eastern European States to its second 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**

22. The Chair recalled that, at the first part of its first session, the ad hoc open-ended working group had agreed to adopt the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly as outlined in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/2.

#### **B. Adoption of the agenda**

23. The Chair recalled that, at the first part of its first session, the ad hoc open-ended working group had adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/(I)/1 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1(I)/1/Add.2):

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**

24. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to organize the work of its resumed first session as outlined in the annotated provisional agenda and in the scenario note (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1(I)/1/Add.2 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/3/Rev.1).
25. It was agreed that, in the event that contact groups were established, to the extent possible no more than two such groups would be scheduled to meet at the same time to ensure that smaller delegations could participate in all the deliberations.

### **D. Attendance**

26. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Member States: [to be completed]
27. [[to be completed] were also represented.]
28. [[to be completed] were represented as observers.]
29. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, secretariats of other intergovernmental organizations, and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements attended: [to be completed]
30. Representatives of the following other international organizations attended: [to be completed]
31. Representatives of the following non-governmental, industry, academic and other entities attended: [to be completed].

## **IV. General statements**

32. Introducing the item, the Chair noted that, during the first part of the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, Member States and observers had delivered general statements on the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. Member States and observers that wished to provide additional general observations at the resumed first session were encouraged to do so in writing so that those statements could be made available in the meeting portal.
33. A statement was made by the representative of Nigeria (on behalf of the group of African States).
34. The representative said that his region was in favour of a science-policy panel that was broad in scope, dealing with the issue of chemicals across their life cycle and along the global value chain. The scope should include not only chemicals currently in use and their waste, but also legacy pollution, any future pollution and efforts to prevent pollution before it happened. While highlighting the vital role played by Member States in coordinating actions within their jurisdiction, he also advocated the involvement of the private sector, industry, academia, other United Nations bodies and members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and

location-based knowledge and traditional know-how in the design of the panel and in the implementation of its future work programmes. Specifically, he proposed the involvement of three scientists from each of the United Nations regional groups. Acknowledging that his region did not have sufficient technical or financial capacity to be able to carry out national research that could feed into global assessments, he called for the science-policy panel, through capacity-building, to address that asymmetry and ensure that low- and middle-income countries were not sidelined in global assessments. Adequate financial support would be required to enable the panel to fulfil that function. He also said that the science-policy panel should be designed in such a way that the needs of highly vulnerable populations were met, but with no duplication of existing efforts.

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

35. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/6, which contained an update from the secretariat on resource mobilization efforts, the budget and a provisional workplan.

36. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document, thanking the Governments of China, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the European Commission, for their financial contributions and pledges. Noting that the estimated overall cost of the ad hoc open-ended working group process would be about \$8.25 million, he said that the \$2.3 million received to date had been sufficient to cover the cost of the process up to and including the current resumed first session. Since the document had been issued, however, an additional \$1.5 million was in the pipeline from the Government of Norway, the European Commission, and the Government of Japan. The additional financial contributions would enable the ad hoc open-ended working group to make plans for the intersessional period in advance of the second session, although funds still needed to be raised for the work to be conducted after the second session. While there had been positive developments in terms of the funding for the ad hoc open-ended working group, the cost of staffing the secretariat had largely been covered by the allocation of existing UNEP staff on a part-time basis. This approach was unsustainable for UNEP and future staffing arrangements would have to be on a cost-recovery basis. Nevertheless, he confirmed that two junior professional officer posts would be added to the secretariat, sponsored by the Governments of China and France, which would greatly help with the preparations for the second session. The representative of the secretariat called upon Member States in a position to do so to provide financial contributions to support the implementation of all aspects of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8. If no Member State offered to host the second session, foreseen for October 2023, then it would be held in Nairobi. The Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi was, however, extremely busy in the fourth quarter of 2023, organizing meetings both in Nairobi and in other locations; the second session might therefore have to be postponed to the first quarter of 2024. This would have implications for the work during the intersessional period and potentially for the timing of the third session, although Switzerland had confirmed that it remained in a position to host the third and final session of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

37. Noting that document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/6 provided a broad overview of the budgetary elements, the representative of the secretariat suggested that an informal consultation on budget issues be convened during the current meeting to enable the secretariat to provide further clarification with regard to the issues described in the meeting document and what could feasibly be included in the intersessional work plan in relation to the funding that was available or foreseen.

38. Highlighting some of the ongoing efforts to further the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, he thanked the 500 participants in the webinar on the scope of the science-policy panel that had been held on 24 January 2023 as the third in a series. He encouraged even greater participation in the fourth webinar. He also urged those Member States that had not done so to designate a national focal point for the process of establishing the science-policy panel, as only 113 national focal points had been registered to date.

39. The Chair thanked the representative of the secretariat for the offer of an informal consultation to further clarify issues related to the budget and proposed that the ad hoc open-ended working group take up the offer.

40. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, stressed that, in view of the limited time available for the ad hoc open-ended working group to deliver on its mandate, it was important to clarify the work to be carried out during the intersessional periods. That work was dependent on what the working group sought to achieve at each of its sessions. In terms of the scheduling of the second session, it was important not only to maintain

momentum, but also to ensure that there was enough time to complete any planned intersessional work. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that the planning of the intersessional work should also take into account the work programme of the secretariat and available funds.

41. Another representative said that there was a logical sequence in which to consider the various issues. The resources required would depend on the intersessional work requested, which would be dependent on the decisions taken on the scope and function of the future panel. She did not see any merit in considering resource requirements in parallel with the substantive issues.

42. One representative said that the provisional workplan currently addressed only some of the elements of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8. The ad hoc open-ended working group should also have the time and space to consider the other issues in paragraph 5 and the elements listed in paragraph 6 of the resolution. The work programme should deal with all the matters equally.

43. Two representatives stressed the importance of clarifying which decisions needed to be taken by the ad hoc open-ended working group and which could be taken by the panel itself once it had been established. In that respect, one of them requested that the secretariat prepare, for consideration at the second session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, the outline of a first draft of a resolution to establish the panel, including annexes on the related rules of procedure, functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements, taking into account the discussions at the current resumed first session and written submissions.

44. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to provide more clarity with regard to some of the elements of the proposed budget, such as the details of the cost of travel and meeting arrangements. She also asked that the secretariat outline the key elements of the resource mobilization strategy as a basis for further discussion.

45. The ad hoc open-ended working group also agreed to convene an informal consultation with the secretariat on the budget document (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/6) for interested representatives of Member States, to be facilitated by the Chair.

46. [To be completed]

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

47. Introducing the agenda item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/4, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/5, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/4 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/6. In line with the guidance provided by Member States at the first part of the first session, the secretariat had focused on preparing documentation on scope and principal functions for the current meeting. It now stood ready to be guided by the Member States regarding the intersessional work required for future sessions, as well as regarding the split between the issues to be covered by the ad hoc open-ended working group and those to be covered by the science-policy panel itself.

48. In document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/4, the secretariat had proposed a four-step approach for establishing the scope of the panel, including suggesting an integrative approach to establishing scope, a conceptual framework to guide the work of the panel, consideration as to whether to explicitly include or exclude certain dimensions and identification of relevant entities that the panel would most directly support in the light of its scope. The secretariat had provided an overview of the range of issues that could be considered by the panel and now sought clear guidance as to the intended breadth of the scope of the panel..

49. Document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/5 focused on the principal functions of the panel as defined in resolution 5/8, namely undertaking “horizon-scanning”, conducting assessments, managing knowledge and facilitating information-sharing, as well as the function of capacity-building, which was implicit in the text of the resolution and had been highlighted by some representatives at the first part of the first session as a desirable function. The ad hoc open-ended working group was invited to agree on a process for the development of a proposal on principal functions, provide guidance on possible intersessional work, consider the overview of the current landscape of existing science-policy interfaces (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/INF/4) and begin consideration of and provide guidance on the key elements of institutional arrangements.

50. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed their gratitude to the secretariat for the useful documentation prepared for the current meeting.

51. With regard to scope, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and one observer, expressed their support for an integrated approach, although the representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that the panel should still be able to focus on the three main elements of chemicals, waste and pollution separately. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed a preference for a broad scope that allowed for flexibility in responding to future challenges. Several representatives, agreeing that the scope should not be narrow, highlighted the importance, nevertheless, for it to be clear. One representative said that only waste and pollution from chemicals should be considered, as otherwise the scope of the panel would be too broad, whereas other representatives stressed the need to consider all types of pollution and waste. One observer, referring to the annex to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/4, said that the “impact/pollution-down” approach to the scope was preferable and it was therefore disappointing that the document focused on a “chemicals-up” approach.
52. Several representatives expressed the view that the panel should focus on issues in developing countries in particular, with several other representatives highlighting the need to build capacity in developing countries.
53. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underlined that the work of the new panel should not duplicate the work of other entities but rather complement it and fill any information gaps. One representative noted that it would be more appropriate to consider the issue when discussing institutional arrangements rather than as an element of the scope of the panel. The same representative also highlighted the need for the panel to be cost-effective and practical.
54. Some representatives said that criteria should be developed for a prioritization process for the panel’s work, with one representative stating that it was preferable for the ad hoc open-ended working group to focus on determining such criteria rather than finalizing the conceptual framework. Several representatives highlighted the importance of discussing the conceptual framework at the current meeting. Several representatives also stressed the need for a strong and effective governance structure for the panel.
55. One representative, noting that the term “scope” had been incorrectly translated in the French version of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/4, said that it was important to define the responsibilities of the members of the panel and that such a task could be assigned to an intersessional working group.
56. Several representatives noted the importance of equitable representation on the panel, in particular with regard to Pacific island States, developing countries and the global South, with one representative highlighting the need for a special mechanism to ensure equitable geographical representation and the participation of as many countries as possible, and several others noting the need to be respectful of, and responsive to, Indigenous and local knowledge.
57. Regarding the draft objective for the panel suggested by the secretariat, although some representatives said that that it was appropriate to focus on value chains, others did not agree, saying that the scope would become too narrow. One observer noted that the draft objective did not refer specifically to “chemicals” and a focus on value chains implied a focus on products rather than chemicals in waste or pollution, and so would not be in line with resolution 5/8. Another observer highlighting that, in developing countries in particular, chemicals in products was not the most pressing issue, said that a focus in the objective on the effects on human health and ecosystems would be more appropriate. One representative said that it was more pertinent to consider the value chain as one element under the conceptual framework rather than as part of the overall objective. Many representatives noted that the objective should be more closely aligned with the wording of resolution 5/8. Several representatives expressed the view that the objective should focus on the provision of policy-relevant evidence and advice, with one representative stressing that the panel should act as an early warning system for policymakers. Several representatives underlined that the objective should not be policy-prescriptive. Others noted that, as there was significant divergence in views regarding the objective, it was vital to discuss the matter in more detail before beginning to consider the panel’s functions.
58. One observer encouraged stakeholders to make in-kind or voluntary contributions to the work of the new panel. Another representative thanked the secretariat for involving WHO in the current process.
59. With regard to principal functions, one representative said that there should be a focus on developing a body that ensured scientific quality; produced timely, relevant and specific deliverables

and recommendations; and drew its legitimacy from being fair, transparent and independent and including balanced representation of experts in the panel. To ensure the effectiveness of the new panel, it was crucial that the outputs of “horizon scans” were concise and were delivered within a reasonable time limit. Furthermore, identifying evidence-based options to address issues would assure the panel’s relevance by ensuring that practical responses to emerging and systemic issues could more readily be initiated. The panel should also ensure scientific quality, relevance and legitimacy through data collation, knowledge management and communications; sound data and knowledge management protocols were therefore vital to support the work of the panel. In addition, the panel should respect and incorporate traditional knowledge systems.

60. Several representatives said that capacity-building should be included as a principal function, as this would allow for effective information exchange and the strengthening of solutions identified in “horizon-scanning” and environmental assessments. One representative highlighted that a marketplace approach, such as that developed under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), would lead to improved technical and technological cooperation, while another highlighted the importance of developing appropriate curricula at all levels of education.

61. A large number of representatives took the floor to comment on the principal functions of the new science-policy panel. Many, including three speaking on behalf of groups of countries, voiced support for the four functions described in paragraph 2 of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, with some stating that those four functions were sufficient. Many others, however, including the three speaking on behalf of groups of countries, called for an additional capacity-building function, although one representative was of the view that capacity-building should be part of the dissemination of knowledge, under the functions outlined in paragraph 2 (c) and (d) of the resolution, and another suggested that it be included under the assessment function. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, also called for an additional financial assistance function.

62. Many of those who spoke took the opportunity to describe what they considered to be the salient aspects of the various functions.

63. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the main purpose of the horizon-scanning function was to identify emerging issues in the management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution, and to provide early warning of risks. Individual representatives suggested that the horizon-scanning process should be led by experts; further deliberations should be held on its purpose and on the composition of a group of experts that might lead the process; horizon-scanning should be clearly defined within the context of the panel to avoid misinterpretation; the function should complement, and not duplicate, horizon-scanning exercises already carried out by various organizations participating in IOMC; and the function’s outcome should be incorporated into future work plans or used to identify areas for assessment. One representative called for the term “horizon-scanning” to be replaced by a term that was more widely understood. Another representative said that it was vital to ensure that the output of the horizon-scanning process was concise and delivered within a reasonable time limit.

64. On the assessment function, several representatives said that assessments should be thematic and cover specific issues. One representative pointed out that assessments with too broad a scope might lose their impact. Individual representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that in its assessments the science-policy panel should adopt a cross-cutting approach, taking into account socioeconomic and political factors and gender issues; address pollution-related challenges that affected developing countries in particular; establish a specialized working group of experts for each assessment; and draw on and combine the approaches and experiences of relevant bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and IPBES. Other issues raised by individual representatives included that it was not within the mandate of the ad hoc open-ended working group to determine, a priori, the number, type or scope of the assessments; the science-policy panel should be granted the freedom and flexibility to adapt its methodologies according to the subject matter at hand.

65. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and one observer, highlighted the importance of the function in paragraph 2 (c) of resolution 5/8, namely providing up-to-date and relevant information, identifying key gaps in scientific research, encouraging and supporting communication between scientists and policymakers, explaining and disseminating findings for different audiences, and raising public awareness. Related suggestions made by individual representatives and observers included formulating a communication strategy and possibly putting in place a communication advisory board; ensuring that knowledge management was aimed at inclusivity, particularly for low-income and middle-income countries and Indigenous Peoples;



developing an engagement strategy that identified key stakeholders and established approaches for interacting with them; encouraging the formation of a mechanism for working with indigenous knowledge systems; providing advice on the evidence gaps that, if filled, would enable more robust policy development and implementation and more informed government decision-making; and ensuring that human rights, including the right to information, was central in stakeholder engagement.

66. With respect to the proposed information-sharing function, individual representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and observers, said that the function should emphasize the ability of Member States and stakeholders to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution; include clear communication of risk and impact; and help increase the accessibility of knowledge, as scientific publications were important resources for governments and for citizen science programmes and monitoring, yet were often not publicly available. One representative suggested that the panel should have a separate key function of providing a stakeholder interface to ensure that information reached policymakers, connected researchers and policymakers, incorporated the information available at the country level and facilitated information-sharing and technology development and transfer.

67. Many of the representatives who supported the addition of a specific capacity-building function, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, and one observer, said that it was important to ensure that all countries could contribute to the panel's work and implement its outputs. Several observed that a capacity-building function would also strengthen the panel's information exchange function and the outputs of its horizon-scanning and assessment functions. Specific areas of focus for capacity-building mentioned by individual representatives included translating scientific data into policy-relevant documents and testing infrastructures; applying scientific information to decision-making relevant to advancing the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution; improving policy coherence across the chemicals, waste and pollution prevention sectors within national governments, in coordination with and complementary to other such efforts, including those of the participating organizations of IOMC; producing science-based knowledge to support a diversity of interested parties, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries; assisting local scientists in gap analysis, data knowledge and the development and dissemination of regional and national policy briefs; equipping local scientists and experts with the tools needed to put them on an equal footing with their counterparts; facilitating matchmaking between those providing solutions and the developing countries hardest hit by the adverse effects of chemicals, waste and pollution; and developing appropriate relevant curricula at all levels of education.

68. An additional financial assistance function was proposed by a number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and some observers. Financial resources could support the implementation of the panel's outputs; capacity-building; and participation in the panel's work.

69. One representative suggested that an additional key function would be to provide information to policymakers, in a transparent manner, on who would be most affected by their policies, especially socially and economically.

70. During the discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and one observer, spoke about the nature of the panel itself, saying that it should be interdisciplinary, have regional and gender balance and incorporate sources of both traditional and scientific knowledge. Several mentioned that transparency was important, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, who recommended the development of guidelines on the transparent selection of experts and how to deal with conflicts of interest and data sensitivity.

71. Following the discussion, the ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to establish a contact group on the scope and the principal functions of the science-policy panel, with a view to developing a proposal to provide clarity on the panel's scope; developing a proposal to provide clarity on the panel's principal functions; and identifying possible intersessional work related to the scope and functions for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group at its second session.

72. The contact group would be co-chaired by Marine Collignon (France) and David Kapindula (Zambia). Its discussions were to be guided by Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, as well as the need to avoid duplication of effort and to complement existing science-policy interface functions in other relevant bodies. The contact group would take into account the views expressed in plenary and the documents prepared for the first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group and would consider the objective of panel; the scope of panel, including whether to take an integrative approach; the principal functions set out in paragraph 2 of Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 and any additional functions that had been identified, taking into account document

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.1/5; and possible further work to be undertaken by the secretariat on scope and function during the intersessional period. It was also agreed that the contact group would first consider the panel's objective and scope and then its functions, followed by intersessional work if time allowed.

73. Addressing comments related to the need for regional and gender balance in the panel membership, as well as transparency and disclosure of conflicts of interest, the Chair proposed that such elements be considered during the discussion on intersessional work and the documents needed for the next session of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

74. [to be completed]

## **VII. Other matters**

75. [to be completed]

## **VIII. Adoption of the report of the session**

76. [to be completed]

## **IX. Closure of the session**

77. [to be completed]

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