

- Thank you, Madame Chair, and good afternoon distinguished colleagues.
- Since this is the first time Australia is taking the floor in this forum, we would like to congratulate you on your election Madame Chair and thank the Government of Thailand for their generous hosting, we would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Secretariat in well-preparing us for this meeting.
- Australia enters these negotiations with a constructive spirit, recognising the honour and importance of the opportunity to work with our international community to help establish a science policy interface for the global chemicals and waste community.
- Recognizing the interdependency of the discussions on both scope and function, we will be making our intervention on both matters at this time.
- Australia's priority is to develop a body that ensures **scientific quality**, produces **timely, relevant and concrete deliverables and recommendations**, and draws its legitimacy from **being fair, transparent and independent and includes appropriate representation**.
- A further priority for Australia is that the Panel supports the needs of our region, including Pacific Island Countries, and is respectful of, and responsive to, Indigenous and local knowledge.
- It's our view that, as we don't know what's up ahead, the Panel's work would be best served by having a broad scope, limited by a strong and effective prioritisation framework and governance structure.
- Australia has reservations relating to the proposed draft objective as we feel it should be more closely aligned with the carefully constructed language of UNEA Resolution 5/8.
- We would also appreciate a deeper discussion on the proposal to develop a conceptual framework.
- In relation to functions, we believe it's critical to the effectiveness of the panel that the outputs of the horizon-scans are concise and delivered within a reasonable time limit.
- Of further importance to ensuring the panel's relevance, is the function of identifying evidence-based options to address issues. This is so practical responses to emerging and systemic issues can be more readily initiated.
- Further functions of the panel to ensure scientific quality, relevance and legitimacy will be data collation, knowledge management and communications.
  - We suggest this warrants further consideration by the OEWG to ensure the Panel is supported by sound data and knowledge management protocols from the beginning.
- Lastly, Australia strongly values the perspectives and knowledge systems of First Nations peoples. We strongly advocate for the OEWG and ultimately the Science Policy Panel to respect and incorporate traditional knowledge systems.
- Thank you.