

Meeting of the Bureau 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.

Bureau Meeting

Monday, 27 February 2023

13:00 – 15:00 (GMT +3)

Governance Affairs Office Boardroom

Hybrid meeting

Draft Chair's Summary

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. Mrs. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the OEWG, opened the meeting. The meeting agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Lessons learned from OEWG-1.

2. The Chair thanked the Bureau, the Secretariat and Member States for a productive OEWG 1, welcomed the progress made, shared some initial reflections on the process and outcome of OEWG-1, and invited Bureau Members to reflect on the outcome and proceedings of the first meeting, with a view to identifying lessons learned to be taken into account in preparation of OEWG-2 and OEWG-3.
3. The following key points were raised by the bureau:
 - Welcomed the outcomes and progress achieved at OEWG-1, noting that the meeting provided good insight on the tasks ahead and the final outcome of the process.
 - General support to the principle of building on experiences in other, similar processes/panels.
 - Emphasized the need to promote strong engagement of civil society and academia in the meetings and the process, with one Member asking the Secretariat to clarify if the OEWG/UNEA Rules of Procedure require the OEWG meetings to apply the Major Groups and Stakeholders approach;
 - Underlined the need for effective organization of work in preparation for OEWG-2, including the establishment of two parallel contact groups with a clear mandate and agreed working methodology and specific guidance for submitting Conference Room Papers, taking into account practices applied in Multilateral Environmental Agreements, as well as early identification of trained co-facilitators;
 - Requested the Secretariat to ensure timely availability of documents online, including the meeting report from OEWG-1 and upcoming documents for Bureau meetings, to facilitate for Bureau Members to reach out with the regions for their views and concurrence.
4. The Secretariat offered to provide an overview of negotiations approaches for contact groups under MEAs and other fora, while recalling that the OEWG operates under the Rules of Procedures and practices of UNEA. The Secretariat also clarified with regard to stakeholder

participation and accreditation the OEWG operates under the Rules of Procedures of UNEA, noting that in accordance with UNEA resolution 5/8 participation is also open to MEA observers and confirmed that according to the Rules of Procedures the OEWG would not be bound by the Major Groups and Stakeholders approach, and that the Chair may invite specific representatives, including academia, to participate OEWG meetings, while stressing that it will be important to not be selective. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that a dedicated website for the OEWG SPP is being prepared, including information about the meetings and documentation of the Bureau, and that that the meeting report for OEWG-1 will be made available within a few weeks.

5. The Bureau agreed to:
 - Defer the issue of organization of work for OEWG-2 to the next Bureau meeting, including modalities for contact groups;
 - Further discuss how to enhance the engagement of civil society and academia in the process and in the OEWG meetings at the next Bureau meeting;
 - Request the Secretariat to:
 - make available the Bureau meeting documents online in due time;
 - finalise and share the meeting report of OEWG-1 as soon as possible;
 - provide an overview of working methods in contact groups in MEA and other relevant fora for consideration at the next Bureau meeting.

Agenda item 3: Preparations for OEWG-2.

a) Date and venue OEWG-2.

6. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the latest state of play with regard to the dates and venue for OEWG-2 and confirmed that initial contacts had been taken with Jordan and Qatar as possible hosts, with Nairobi as the fallback option. The Secretariat indicated that further analysis and discussions will be required with a view to decide on the preferred venue. The anticipated date for the meeting is 11-15 December, potentially combined with 2-3 days of regional and informal consultations to be held prior to the meeting.
7. One member informed the Bureau that Ecuador is considering to host one of the regional consultations.
8. Following the update, the Chair emphasized, that the decision on the dates and the venue should be made by the Bureau. The Bureau agreed that the date and venue of the meeting should be decided as soon as possible, preferably by early April, and requested that the Secretariat provide an overview of the different options, including related costs and budgets, for consideration at the next bureau meeting.

b) Roadmap towards OEWG-2 and OEWG-3.

9. The Secretariat presented a draft roadmap for the preparations for OEWG-2 and OEWG-3, taking into account the guidance provided at OEWG-1. The Secretariat noted that working documents will be kept short and focused, including options or examples when requested, with further details to be provided in information documents. One of the working documents will include an outline of the zero-draft proposal, reflecting the key elements expected to be included in the final document establishing the Panel. The Secretariat also presented an

overview of planned online webinars and international meetings that could be used for informal consultations between Member States in advance of OEWG-2, based on a more detailed internal workplan with timelines.

10. Bureau Members made the following comments:

- Requested more time to review the draft workplan with the regional groups;
- Requested for that the draft is updated with regard to submissions from Member States, taking into account the outcomes of the OEWG-1 contact groups e.g. on the expected needs and questions of the panel and on operational principles;
- Requested further detail on the sequence and approach of how the planned webinars and informal consultations between Member States and stakeholders will contribute to the preparations for OEWG-2.
- Noted that possible outreach and collaboration with the INC process may be premature at this stage.

11. The meeting decided that Bureau Members are invited to provide written inputs to the Secretariat on the draft roadmap by Tuesday 7 March at the latest, and that the Bureau will consider a revised version of the roadmap, including the timelines and sequence of the planned intersessional work at the next Bureau meeting.

c) Planned documentation for OEWG-2

12. The Secretariat provided an update on planned preparations of documentation for OEWG-2.

13. The Bureau agreed that draft versions of working documents, including the draft annotated agenda and scenario note, should be reviewed by the Bureau before submission to the OEWG.

d) Election of Officers

14. Following the postponement of election of officers in the Bureau from the Eastern European Group and a general request from several Member States to find a pragmatic solution to ensure that the Group is kept informed about important intersessional developments and preparations for OEWG-2, the Bureau agreed to invite the co-chairs for OEWG-1 Contact Group 2 on intersessional work as observers to future Bureau meetings, to act as a resource person when discussing preparations for OEWG-2. This would provide an opportunity to Ms. Ana Berejiani of Georgia to also serve as a channel of communication between the bureau and the Eastern European Group. Subject to the agreement of this proposal by Bureau Members not present at the meeting, Ms. Berejiani will be approached by the Chair and invited to attend forthcoming Bureau meetings.

Agenda item 4: Organization of work.

15. The Bureau agreed to initially plan its meetings with a frequency of 4-6 weeks and to schedule the next meeting for 4 April (pm).

Agenda item 5: Other Matters

16. A Bureau member recalled the agreement of the Bureau to further discuss WHO engagement in the process. The Secretariat explained that despite strong encouragement from UNEP's side, the WHO Secretariat has clarified that due to resource constraints it is limited to undertaking a peer review of background documents, and contribute in the context of the Technical Advisory Group.
17. The Bureau agreed that engagement of WHO will be considered at the next bureau meeting and to request the Secretariat to provide an overview of possible options for WHO to engage in the process.
18. Bureau members requested the secretariat to clarify the role and the terms of reference of the Technical Advisory Group established to support the UNEP Executive Director in this process. The Secretariat indicated that the OEWG website will include that information, including TORs and biographies of TAG members, as soon as possible.
19. The Bureau agreed to encourage the Secretariat to make the relevant information on the TAG available to MS as soon as possible and requested a full list of organizations/persons that will be invited to peer review the documentation for OEWG-2.

Agenda item 6: Closing of the meeting.

20. The Chair closed the meeting at 15:20 (GMT+3).

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Annex: List of Participants

The OEWG SPP Bureau Members:

Ms. Gudi Alkemade Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations Environment Programme.
Mr. Linroy Christian Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Director of Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs.
Mr. Cyrus Mageria, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Ag. Director MEAs, Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
Ms. Saqlain Syedah Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Environment Programme.
Mr. Michel Tschirren Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Senior Policy Advisor at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN).
Mr. LI Jinhui Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University.

The UN Environment Program Secretariat was Represented by:

Mr. Kevin Helps, Principal Officer and Head of the Secretariat of the open-ended working group.
Mr. Ulf Björnholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies.
Mr. Stadler Trengrove, Legal Advisor.