

---

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.

Wednesday, 11 January 2023

15:00 - 16:30 (EAT; GMT + 3)

Online

**Bureau Summary**

**REPORT OF THE THIRD 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**

**11 JANUARY 2023, ONLINE**

**ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.**

1. The third meeting of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution was opened at 13:00 CET on 11 January 2023 by the interim OEWG Chair, Ms. Saqlain Syedah. The meeting was convened in an online setting.
2. Ms. Syedah started by welcoming members of the Bureau and then invited the Bureau to consider and adopt the provisional agenda circulated prior to the meeting. The agenda was adopted without any modification.

**ITEM 2 ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING FOR THE RESUMED FIRST SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON A SCIENCE-POLICY PANEL TO CONTRIBUTE FURTHER TO THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND WASTE AND TO PREVENT POLLUTION (OEWG1.2)**

**a. Update from the Secretariat on the preparations for the OEWG1.2.**

3. The Chair invited the OEWG Secretariat to provide an update on the status of preparations for the resumed first session of the OEWG.
4. The Secretariat provided an update on the preparations, noting close collaboration with colleagues at ESCAP and UNON including concerning the first day and election of officers. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that over 100 tickets had been issued to support attendance of Member States eligible for travel support and of some instances of delegates having difficulty with obtaining their Visa.
5. The Secretariat also noted that the Government of Thailand has pledged to support delegates who do not have Embassies in their country so that they may receive a Visa upon arrival.

6. The Secretariat noted that registration will remain open until 15 January<sup>1</sup> and requested the Bureau members to encourage their constituents to register well in advance. The Secretariat also requested the Bureau members to encourage their constituents to obtain their Visa as soon as possible, and that letters have been requested from the Thai government to support this process in instances where no Thai Embassy or Consulate General is present.

7. The Chair thanked the secretariat for their detailed updated on preparations for OEWG 1.2 and opened the floor to Bureau members for comments or questions.

8. The Bureau members then inquired on the cause of the ticket cancellations, the status of the number of confirmed focal points.

9. The Secretariat confirmed that not all cancellations were due to issues related to the receipt of Visas, and requested Bureau members to reassure the Member State representatives that letters will be issued by the Government of Thailand. The Secretariat also confirmed that there are 515 registered participants as of 11 January, and that there are 109 country focal points confirmed. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude for support from the Bureau, and will provide the updated list of focal points to the Bureau members so that they can assist in confirming additional focal points. The Secretariat also noted that the registration deadline may be moved to 20 January (for non-sponsored participants).

10. Bureau members requested confirmation that all approved registrants without an embassy in their country can expect to receive a Visa on arrival, and whether the Secretariat has funding for additional sponsored delegates.

11. The Secretariat confirmed that the Thai Government are preparing a letter which will enable those without Embassies in their countries to obtain a Visa on arrival. The Secretariat also notified the Bureau that the window for sponsored travel has closed and that the Secretariat will not be able to facilitate additional sponsored travel in the time remaining until the start of the meeting.

12. The Bureau requested that Member States are notified as soon as possible to any change in the registration deadline.

13. Finally, responding to a request from the Bureau, the Secretariat noted that it may not be possible to include indigenous knowledge in the next webinar but underscored the importance of its consideration in the discussion along with the citizen science. .

#### **b. Preparations for the election of remaining officers to the OEWG Bureau**

13. The Chair invited the OEWG Secretariat to provide an update on the preparations for the election of remaining officers to the OEWG Bureau, and confirmed that a document has been circulated to the Bureau Members.

14. The Secretariat noted that the circulated document, which would be made available to the OEWG as an information document, outlines the procedures of filling the open vacancies in

---

<sup>1</sup> Note : the deadline for registration was subsequently extended until Friday 27 January 2023

the Bureau through an election and noted that it does not preclude the option of filling these vacancies via consensus.

15. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat and emphasized the importance of electing a chair during OEWG 1.2. The Bureau also highlighted the potential need to complete the election of the Eastern European States group vacancies after the initial plenary and following further regional consultations. The Bureau also requested clarification on the requirements related to voting eligibility of delegates, the process for requesting or initiating a vote should vacancies be left open, and who is eligible to receive a vote.

16. The Secretariat confirmed that credentials signed by Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs are not required, but are welcome if this is the practice of the government. Representatives are required to register online through the INDICO platform by uploading a formal letter or a Note Verbale from their Ministry (including inter alia, their Ministry for Foreign Affairs or Environment) or from their Embassy or Permanent Mission addressed to the Secretariat containing the composition of delegation.

17. The Secretariat also confirmed that the OEWG can decide when to conduct elections, and that the election of the Chair should take place as early as possible. It is not required to have all vacant seats filled, however it would be advisable to do so if possible. As a UN body, any Member State can call for a vote, or the Chair/Acting Chair can decide to initiate a secret ballot, which is usually the practice when no consensus is achieved.

18. The Secretariat confirmed that the ballot papers will contain the names of the self-nominations received up to 48 hours in advance of the meeting along with two additional spaces to inscribe the names of other candidates. Delegates can select up to two delegates<sup>2</sup>. The Secretariat also confirmed that the nomination period had concluded after the conclusion of the OEWG 1.1 in Nairobi.

19. The Secretariat requested clearance by the Bureau of the note before it be made available to the OEWG1.2 as an Information Document. The Secretariat also proposed a technical briefing for Member States the afternoon on Sunday 29 January.

20. The Chair confirmed that the note could be circulated to Member States, and supported the convening of such briefing in the lead up to OEWG 1.2 on 29 January.

21. The Secretariat concluded by indicating the conduct of a mock secret ballot process to ensure all preparations are in place.

### **c. Organization of work for OEWG1.2, including possible contact groups and co-facilitators**

---

<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, delegates can:

- i. tick the box for two candidates that have been communicated to the Secretariat; OR
- ii. tick the box for one of the candidates and write in the name of another candidate; OR
- iii. write down the name of two representatives that belongs to the EE that have not been printed on the ballot; OR
- iv. leave their ballot blank.

22. The Chair invited the OEWG Secretariat to provide an update on the Organization of work for OEWG1.2, including possible contact groups and co-facilitators.

23. The Secretariat noted that they are in the process of reviewing focal points and registrations to generate a list of potential facilitators/co-facilitators for the contact groups. It was anticipated that there will be one contact group for scope and one for function, with an option for a possible third group focused on the workplan and budget. This would potentially require five to six representatives to act as facilitators/co-facilitators. The Secretariat aims to identify potential candidates in the next week to confirm their participation in this role, noting the significant time required to act in this capacity. The Secretariat also confirmed that support will be offered by the Secretariat to support these three groups. The Secretariat requested the Bureau to notify them of any volunteer representatives for these roles.

24. The chair thanked the Secretariat and opened the floor to bureau members. Bureau members then made note of several points and suggestions. The Bureau members suggested that the working documents be introduced during plenary by the Secretariat and allow for an exchange of views from stakeholders. A Bureau member questioned whether there should be separate contact groups for both scope and function. Bureau members also noted that a discussion on intersessional work following OEWG 1.2 could be included in Agenda item 5 on the options for the timetable and organization of work of the ad hoc open-ended working group. It was further proposed that, should intersessional work be discussed under Agenda item 5, this agenda item should remain open for further discussion to allow the OEWG to proceed to Agenda item 6 as discussions under Agenda item 6 may impact the discussions regarding Agenda item 5. Bureau members also suggested that it should be indicated during plenary that the discussions on certain items can be done in contact groups to ensure clarity with Member States that contact groups are planned during plenary time.

25. The Bureau members also noted that discussions on the budget of the OEWG could take place in a small non-contact group.

27. The Secretariat also noted that directions from the Plenary on where the Secretariat should focus its work during the intersessional period is key, including as it relates to scope, as well as rules of procedure, governance structure, decision making etc. so that these can be finalized at the third OEWG. The Secretariat also confirmed that interpretation coverage for 8 plenary sessions throughout the week are available.

### **ITEM 3. NEXT BUREAU MEETING**

28. The Secretariat proposed that the next Bureau meeting be scheduled for Sunday, 29 January 2023 from 6:15 – 7 p.m., UNESCAP building, Bangkok, which Bureau members supported.

30. The Secretariat noted that the meeting plan will be confirmed following the present discussions. The Secretariat also confirmed that contact groups facilitators, and the work plan/timetable will be confirmed and updated.

They also wished to confirm that the Bureau will have the opportunity to discuss everyday during the meeting, and asked for clarification on the involvement of WHO.

33. Bureau members noted the value of including WHO, and asked for the Bureau members to reflect on the best way to include WHO, which may include their participation in Bureau meetings. Further, they asked the Secretariat to clarify if the Bureau has the authority to invite representatives to observers to their meetings.

34. The Secretariat confirmed that the Bureau has the authority to invite individuals who are not members of the Bureau to attend as observers, noting that it is however unusual to invite intergovernmental organizations unless they can provide specific expertise that is relevant to the discussion of a Bureau meetings, and their participation could be . limited to agenda items of particular relevance to their expertise.

#### **ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS.**

36. No other matter was raised.

#### **ITEM 5. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING.**

37. The meeting was closed at 16:30 EAT on 11 January 2023.

**Participants:** Mr. Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali, for Africa), Ms. Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq, for Asia Pacific), Mr. Cyrus Mageria (Kenya, for Africa), Ms. Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan, for Asia Pacific), Mr. Michel Tschirren (Switzerland, for the Western European and Others Group), Ms. Valentina Sierra (Uruguay, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Ms. Gudi Alkemade (the Netherlands, in an observer capacity), Mr. Jinhui Li (China, in an observer capacity) and UNEP Secretariat.