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*African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

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**African Ministerial Conference on the Environment  
Nineteenth session**

Expert group meeting

Addis Ababa, 14–16 August 2023

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

**Preparations for the fifth session of the International  
Conference on Chemicals Management**

**Africa's preparations for the fifth session of the International  
Conference on Chemicals Management\*\***

**Note by the secretariat**

**I. Introduction**

1. Many chemicals have the potential to cause significant harm to the environment if not managed properly. They can contaminate soil, water bodies, and air, leading to adverse effects on ecosystems, wildlife, and plant life. Chemicals can also pose serious risks to human health, especially if they are toxic, carcinogenic, or mutagenic. Exposure to hazardous chemicals can occur through various routes such as inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact.
2. Sound chemical management aims to minimize the release of hazardous substances and prevent environmental pollution. Effective management ensures that chemicals are used, produced, and disposed of safely to protect the health of workers, consumers, and the general population.
3. Sound chemical management contributes to sustainable development by promoting the use of safer alternatives and encouraging the adoption of cleaner production processes. It helps minimize waste generation, conserve resources, and reduce the environmental impact of chemical manufacturing, use, and disposal.
4. Countries around the world have recognized the need for sound chemical management and have established international agreements and conventions, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. Adhering to these agreements ensures global cooperation and coordination in managing chemicals and their potential risks.
5. In summary, sound management of chemicals is crucial to protect the environment and human health, promote sustainable development, and fulfill international obligations. It involves adopting responsible practices throughout the life cycle of chemicals, from production and use to disposal, to minimize risks and ensure a safer and healthier world for present and future generations.
6. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a global policy framework which aims to achieve sound management of chemicals throughout a life cycle approach

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and prevent the adverse effects of chemicals on human health and the environment. SAICM was first adopted in 2006 and its first phase ended in 2020.

7. The vision for SAICM beyond 2020 is to establish a new framework for sound management of chemicals and waste that builds on the progress made under the first phase as well as contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The new framework, 'Beyond 2020' chemicals framework, aims to:

- (a) Minimize adverse impacts of chemicals on human health and the environment by improving the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle.
- (b) Contribute to the achievement of several sustainable development goals.
- (c) Address emerging issues and challenges related to chemicals and waste management, such as the impact of chemicals on wildlife and ecosystems, the rise of electronic waste, and the increasing volumes of plastic waste.
- (d) Promote international cooperation and collaboration among governments, industry, and civil society to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste.

## **II. Background of the SAICM intersessional process**

8. The fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management marked a significant milestone by initiating an intersessional process to prepare recommendations for the future strategy and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. This process was set in motion through resolution IV/4. Resolution IV/4 acknowledged that SAICM's initial 2020 goal of achieving the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle had not been fully accomplished and recognized the need for continued global efforts to address chemical management challenges. It highlighted the importance of advancing beyond 2020 and building upon the achievements and lessons learned from SAICM's first phase.

9. The intersessional process established through resolution IV/4 aimed to gather input and perspectives from stakeholders worldwide to develop recommendations for a post-2020 framework on chemicals and waste management. The process involved multiple steps and consultations, engaging governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry representatives, and other stakeholders.

10. The intersessional process integrated with the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, providing an opportunity to link the future of chemicals and waste management with the broader sustainable development agenda. This ensured alignment with the sustainable development goals and facilitated a comprehensive and integrated approach to global sustainability.

11. The overall objective of the intersessional process was to develop recommendations for a post-2020 framework on chemicals and waste management that would build on the achievements of SAICM's first phase and address the evolving challenges and opportunities in the field. The process aimed to promote sustainable development, protect human health and the environment, enhance governance, strengthen capacity building, and foster international cooperation.

12. The recommendations resulting from the intersessional process were intended to inform the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, where decisions on the future of SAICM and the post-2020 framework would be made. The process provided an inclusive and participatory platform for stakeholders to shape the global agenda on chemicals and waste management, ensuring that diverse perspectives and experiences were taken into account in charting the way forward.

## **III. Roadmap towards the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management**

13. The fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management to be held from 25 to 29 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany, will be a major opportunity to review the progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and to make recommendations for the future of chemical safety and waste management.

14. Some recommendations for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management include:

- (a) Strengthening the focus on health and environmental protection. The post-2020 SAICM should place a greater emphasis on protecting human health and the environment from the

risks posed by chemicals and waste. This could be done by strengthening the risk assessment and risk management framework, and by increasing the focus on preventive measures.

(b) Ensuring that the post-2020 SAICM is inclusive and participatory. The post-2020 SAICM should be developed in a more inclusive and participatory manner, with the full involvement of all stakeholders, including governments, industry, academia, and civil society. This will help to ensure that the framework is relevant and effective.

(c) Providing adequate resources for implementation. The post-2020 SAICM will need to be adequately resourced in order to be successful. This will require increased investment in capacity building and technical assistance, particularly for developing countries.

(d) Promoting the use of innovative technologies. The post-2020 SAICM should promote the use of innovative technologies to improve the sound management of chemicals and waste. This could include the use of new risk assessment methods, new technologies for the safe production and use of chemicals, and new technologies for the treatment and disposal of waste.

15. These are just a few of the recommendations that could be made for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The conference will be an important opportunity to discuss the future of chemical safety and waste management, and to make recommendations on how to improve the sound management of chemicals and waste around the world.

#### **IV. Africa's contribution to the intersessional process for the post-2020 SAICM**

16. The Africa regional consultations on post-2020 SAICM were held online on 26 January 2023. The consultations were organized by the SAICM Secretariat and the African Regional Chemicals and Waste Management Centre. The purpose of the consultations was to inform stakeholders from across Africa about the progress of the intersessional co-chairs consultation process and to prepare for the resumed fourth meeting of the SAICM process.

17. The consultations discussed a wide range of issues, including the draft text of the single consolidated document, the workplan for the post-2020 Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and the need for capacity building and technical assistance for developing countries.

18. The consultations concluded with a set of recommendations for the SAICM secretariat and the intersessional process co-chairs. These recommendations included the need to strengthen the draft text of the single consolidated document, to include provisions for capacity building and technical assistance for developing countries, and to ensure that the workplan for the post-2020 SAICM is aligned with the priorities of African countries.

19. The Africa regional consultations concluded that the draft text of the single consolidated document should be strengthened, particularly in the areas of risk assessment, risk management, and capacity building and technical assistance. The participants discussed the need for a more inclusive and participatory process for developing the post-2020 SAICM, and called for more opportunities for stakeholders from across Africa to provide input.

20. Africa's key proposal included on the development of an international code of conduct on chemicals and waste management - SAICM/IP.4/CRP.10, to provide clear guidance in this complex and immensely impactful area. The rationale and goal for the code is to foster sound and sustainable management of chemicals and waste with a view to harmonizing varying standards and regulations, foster global cooperation, enhance protection of human health and the environment, prevent illegal trade and dumping, build capacity and technical assistance, and advance achievement of the sustainable development goals.

21. The opportunity to propose such a code can be offered by the Beyond 2020 Framework. However, this opportunity will require structures to develop such a code and subsequently its operationalization.

#### **V. Strengthening the African group of negotiators for SAICM beyond 2020**

22. The African group of negotiators is a group of experts that work together to represent the interests of the continent in international negotiations on various environmental issues, including chemicals and waste management. The African group of negotiators is important as it enables African countries to speak with a unified voice in international negotiations. The African group of negotiators

provides a platform for African countries to share information and expertise on chemicals management and contribute towards strengthening the capacity of African countries to manage chemicals and waste.

23. The African group of negotiators on chemicals management has been active and has played a key role in the development of international frameworks and negotiations on chemicals and waste management. The African group of negotiators on chemicals management needs to be strengthened in order to play a leading role in the development of the post-2020 SAICM. The group should ensure that the new framework takes into account the specific needs of African countries, and that it provides adequate resources for implementation.

24. Like the African group of negotiators on plastic pollution established through a decision at the resumed eighteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Dakar, Senegal in 2022, the African group of negotiators on chemicals management needs to be formally recognized in the regional structures and mandated or tasked to lead in the post-2020 SAICM processes. It is therefore critical for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to consider formalizing the African group of negotiators on chemicals management.

## **VI. Proposed action**

25. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, at its nineteenth ordinary session, is requested to:

- (a) Endorse the formalization and establishment of the African group of negotiators on chemicals management.
  - (b) Endorse the Africa region proposal on the development of an international code of conduct on chemicals and waste management under the auspices of the relevant organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, with the support and engagement of governments, the private sector, and civil society.
  - (c) Call for a dedicated global financial mechanism for the post-2020 SAICM.
  - (d) Request organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals family, within their respective mandates and resources, to lead the stakeholder engagement process for the development of the international code of conduct on chemicals and waste management.
  - (e) Request the African group of negotiators on chemicals management to develop a resource mobilisation strategy for chemicals management in Africa.
  - (f) Encourage the private sector to participate and engage in the sound management of chemicals.
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