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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  
Tuesday, 3 October 2023  
15:00 – 17:30 (EAT; GMT + 3)  
Online meeting

### **Bureau Meeting Summary**

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

1. Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the OEWG, opened the meeting, and welcomed all participants.
2. The meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.

#### **Agenda item 2: Summary of the Bureau meeting on 8 August 2023.**

3. The Chair invited Bureau Members to endorse the summary of the Bureau meeting held on 8 August 2023 as prepared by the Secretariat.
4. Following comments on behalf of the EU, it was proposed to slightly amend paragraph 20, so it would read: “20. *The Secretariat thanked the Bureau for their feedback and took note that, in line with the guidance by the bureau, it is anticipated to not schedule more than two contact groups at the same time.*”
5. The Bureau endorsed the summary as amended.

#### **Agenda item 3: Organization of intersessional work leading up to OEWG 2.**

6. Following introduction by the Chair, the Secretariat was invited to update the Bureau on a) the state of play of the preparations of the documents, and the (planned) regional meetings, webinars and side events, b) the organization of work during the second session, including on potential contact groups, and c) further considerations for the conduct of the second session ([presentation](#)).
7. Bureau members expressed appreciation for the Secretariat’s thorough preparation of the meeting.

#### ***Update on the state of play of the preparations of the documents, and the (planned) regional meetings, webinars and side events:***

8. In response to a question from a Bureau member regarding the number of Member States (MS) participating in the regional meetings held for the African Group and the Asia and Pacific Group, the Secretariat further clarified that: participation being limited to in-person participation for the African Group meeting may have impacted participation; and the hybrid format of the Asia and Pacific Group meeting in principle allowed all MS to participate, but that the early planning of this meeting just after advanced unedited versions of the working documents were available, might have been a factor for those MS who opted not to participate. The Secretariat took note of the utility of providing the Bureau with key lessons or messages which emerge from the regional meetings.
9. Further, the Secretariat clarified that the targeted deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023 for making available on the OEWG 2 website the final (edited and translated) working documents is on course and that the Secretariat is striving to make advance English versions available earlier. The Secretariat noted that the information documents are expected to be made available at the same time, or soon after.
10. The Secretariat further clarified that the Eastern European Group (EEG) and the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) have not confirmed their regional meetings, and the Secretariat is ready to support representatives from those regions to convene their regional meetings prior to OEWG 2, noting that there may be an opportunity for fostering synergies with meetings and preparations processes for the ongoing negotiation of the INC on plastic pollution.
11. The Secretariat clarified that the “Draft Scenario Note” shared in advance before the Bureau

meeting on 3 October, had already incorporated guidance received from the Bureau at its meeting on 8 August 2023. The draft is dynamic in nature; and is subject to further change following guidance provided by the Chair. The Secretariat also explained that the “Scenario Note” that will be circulated as UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/1 and will be a proposal made on behalf of the Chair.

12. The Chair confirmed that the scenario note is being used in other processes and is helping to ensure that stakeholders are informed about how the meeting will be structured (to the extent that it can be planned), and that it helps to ensure modalities are expressed to delegates in advance.

***Organization of work during the second session, including on potential contact groups:***

13. Reflecting on the Secretariat’s proposals for the conduct of the meeting, the Bureau generally agreed with the proposals.

14. With regard to the Secretariat’s proposal of not having opening statements due to limitation of time as scheduled under Agenda Item 1 (opening of the meeting). The Bureau suggested consideration for allowing opening statements from regional and political groups. After deliberation and discussion, the Bureau agreed that in view of making efficient use of the time during the meeting, and since the OEWG continues under Agenda Item 4, the substantive discussions on proposals for the establishment of the panel, regional and political groups would be invited to make general statements under Agenda Item 4 and not under Agenda Item 1, and Member States and stakeholders would be invited to submit their general statements in writing, to be shared through the meeting portal in advance of or during the meeting.

15. The Bureau furthermore agreed with the Secretariat’s proposal to allow MS and stakeholders to provide written submissions related to the documents in advance of the meeting, with a deadline of 24 November 2023 and to be made available on the OEWG 2 website. The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to ensure that in communicating on the possibility to provide such submissions, it is clarified that these submissions would allow MS and stakeholders to share their views and that they are not a means of revising the OEWG 2 documents prepared by the Secretariat.

16. On the briefings and informal consultations on Saturday, 9 December and Sunday, 10 December 2023, the Bureau agreed that 10 December will be dedicated mainly to regional groups and stakeholder meetings. Regarding the briefings and informal consultations to be held on 9 December, the Bureau will discuss at its next meeting including the proposal from the Secretariat on topics to be addressed. Further the Bureau agreed that these should aim to inform discussions throughout the rest of the week of OEWG 2, and, where relevant, allow for starting with initial exchanges on specific issues.

17. On the Secretariat’s proposal on contact groups, the Bureau expressed their initial views on the proposal and expressed general agreement on the approach proposed. The Bureau indicated that in the scheduling of the contact groups, priority should be given to the issues that have not been discussed before, versus issues such as the scope and functions of the panel. The Secretariat reminded the Bureau of the agreement in the contact group by OEWG 1.2 that, in light of discussions on other elements, the group may wish to come back to the discussion on the panel’s scope. The Chair suggested that this point could be addressed once the Bureau has had a more detailed look at how to schedule and sequence of discussions in the contact group would look like throughout the meeting.

18. On the specific identification of potential contact groups, their possible mandates, their clustering and the expected outcomes. It was noted that it would be good to align the order in the different slides. The Bureau agreed that Bureau members can provide their views on the proposal, following consultation with their relevant constituents, by 24 October 2023.

19. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare, for discussion at the next Bureau meeting, a document on the possible contact groups, as well as a potential sequence for their scheduling, taking into account the feedback of Bureau members.

***Further considerations for the conduct of the second session:***

20. On the skeleton outline, it was indicated that there are different views amongst members from the regions on whether the skeleton should be filled in advance, during or after the second session.

21. Following discussion, the Bureau agreed that the Bureau will closely monitor the development of text for the proposals during the meeting that can or should fill the skeleton outline, with a view that the outcomes of OEWG 2 will result in one document (including annexes) which will provide the basis for further discussion at

OEWG 3. The Bureau noted their preference that during the second session the skeleton outline will be filled with the outcomes of the contact groups.

22. The Bureau also agreed to the proposed tasks for the Bureau, namely to keep track of the requests for further work by the Secretariat, as well as to propose a draft agenda for OEWG 3.

23. With regards to the preparation of draft text for the decisions/resolutions necessary to be adopted at the intergovernmental meeting for the establishment of the panel, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare, for the next meeting of the Bureau, a proposal on the best way forward.

#### **Agenda item 4: Engagement of stakeholders in the OEWG meetings and process.**

24. The Secretariat made a [presentation](#) on the webinar on Options of Engagement and Participation Modalities for Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) to the OEWG which was held on 26 September 2023. The webinar provided an overview of OEWG 1, practicalities of MGS engagement and participation, as well as reflections on coordination meetings amongst MGS and others.

25. The main suggestions by stakeholders arising from these webinars included: creating a central repository on the OEWG portal where MGS can find all the information on who to contact for various issues, including accreditation information; allowing for written submissions; making use of relevant processes to raise awareness with stakeholders, such as for example through the CBD SBSTTA meeting in October.

26. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the update provided and in the ensuing discussion various members noted the following:

- a) Participation of stakeholders in the OEWG process is important;
- b) Not all relevant scientists may be aware of the OEWG process, asking the Secretariat what outreach has been done to raise awareness among the scientific community;
- c) Allowing MS and stakeholders to provide submissions on the meeting documents offers one approach for engagement with stakeholders;
- d) Engaging with scientists is important not only during the OEWG process but also with the future panel once established; and,
- e) In earlier discussions on engagement with stakeholders, the Bureau agreed to give them room for comment at the end of agenda items.

27. The Chair further welcomed the idea of developing a dedicated webpage with relevant information for stakeholders, including on accreditation, on the possibility of stakeholders to provide written submissions, as well as to engage in plenary after MS have spoken on agenda items and in contact groups (as agreed by the Bureau at an earlier meeting).

28. The Chair furthermore asked the Secretariat to clarify on the outreach strategy to relevant stakeholders, notably considering paragraph 7 of UNEA resolution 5/8 which provides a much wider basis for which stakeholders to engage with than is provided for under the Rules of Procedures of UNEA.

29. The Secretariat noted that: their reaching out to various networks has resulted in increased participation by scientific communities who have shown and indicated interest in the process; and written submissions are a great way for scientists and others to engage in the process. The Secretariat underscored their ongoing engagement with other science policy interfaces.

30. The Secretariat also confirmed that a room will be made available to the MGS at OEWG 2 and that they are exploring options to enhance engagement with stakeholders in the OEWG process and beyond.

31. The Chair requested a proposal from the Secretariat to provide an overview of the efforts to engage with stakeholders. The Bureau agreed to further discuss outreach and engagement with stakeholders at their next meeting.

32. The World Health Organization (WHO) representative noted that the World Health Assembly (WHA) has mandated that text be put forward to the Executive Board for consideration at its meeting from 22-27 January 2024 on options for the future involvement of WHO with the new science-policy panel, to prepare for a decision by the WHA in May 2024. She further indicated that WHO may not have been in a position to contribute substantively to the preparation of the meeting documents, though many points that were suggested via email have been taken up. She confirmed that WHO could provide additional text proposals related to the rules and procedures used by WHO but requested for clarification on the scope of

the inputs required from the Secretariat. She sought clarification on whether a statement from the WHO Director General at OEWG 2 would still be welcome, in light of the discussions during the Bureau meeting about opening statements. The representative also inquired whether the Secretariat would like to meet with the IOMC Chair.

33. The Chair thanked the representative from WHO and opened the floor for comments and questions. She confirmed that a high-level statement from the WHO Director General would still be welcome under Agenda Item 1 (Opening of the session). She then gave the floor to the Secretariat to reflect upon some points raised by WHO.

34. The Secretariat noted that the examples provided in the working and information documents are requested by the OEWG and welcomed additional examples from WHO to be included in these documents. They also clarified that the Executive Director of UNEP was requested to establish the OEWG by UNEA, and the OEWG operates under the Rules of Procedure of UNEA, however the institutional arrangements for the future panel are yet to be discussed. The Secretariat welcomed further discussion on options for engagement with WHO, including hosting arrangements, proposed a detailed follow-up conversation with WHO, and confirmed that a meeting with IOMC would be helpful.

35. Following the exchange, the Bureau encouraged the Secretariat and WHO to, where relevant, discuss how the key points raised by WHO can be accommodated in the documentation for the meeting, to ensure that all relevant options are on the table to allow MS to make informed decisions.

#### **Agenda item 5: Organization of work.**

36. The Secretariat noted the previously proposed dates for the next Bureau meetings:

- a) 13:00-15:00 in Nairobi, 14 November 2023, in person (margins of INC 3)
- b) 10 December 2023, in person (prior to OEWG 2)

37. The Bureau confirmed that their next meeting will be held on 14 November in person with hybrid facilities in the margins of INC3, 13:00-15:00 EAT.

38. The Secretariat also confirmed that they would contact the WEOG and EEG to try to establish a date and venue for regional meetings ahead of OEWG 2.

39. The Secretariat presented the current status of the budget, and it was noted that significant resources must be mobilized to achieve the mandate of the OEWG. The Bureau was invited to share with the Secretariat suggestions for further resource mobilization and the Secretariat was requested to present an update on resource mobilization to discuss further at the next Bureau meeting.

#### **Agenda item 6: Other Matters**

40. Bureau Members made the following interventions:

- MS have been invited to submit proposals for possible side events in the margins of UNEA 6, an event related to the Science-policy Panel would be good to consider and would fit within the UNEA 6 theme “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution”;
- Information was requested on registrations for OEWG 2 from the African region;
- Clarification was requested on the registration for Bureau members and travel support; and,
- Clarification was requested on the contact group co-facilitator roles at OEWG 2.

41. The Secretariat provided an update on MS registrations OEWG 2, noting 63 MS have registered, including 30 from the African region. The Secretariat further encouraged the Bureau members to register for the meeting. They also confirmed that eligible Bureau members can apply for sponsored travel along with the focal point from the country.

42. The Chair asked Bureau members to provide suggestions for delegates who could facilitate contact groups at OEWG 2 and clarified that co-facilitators will be chosen from the participants at the meeting.

#### **Agenda item 7: Closing of the meeting.**

43. The Chair closed the meeting at 17:52 (EAT).

**Participants**

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  
H.E. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UNEP  
Mr. Oumar Diaouré Cisse, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Point Focal SAICM, Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Assainissement et du Développement Durable, Mali  
Mr. Cyrus Mageria, Ag. Director MEAs, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya  
Prof. Jinhui Li, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University, China  
Ms. Valentina Sierra, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva  
Mr. Michel Tschirren, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Senior Policy Advisor at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland

**Observers**

Ms. Ana Berejiani, Head of Chemicals Management Division of Waste and Chemicals Management Department, in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia  
Ms. Lesley Onyon, World Health Organization

**UNEP**

Ms. Tessa Goverse  
Mr. Ulf Bjornholm  
Ms. Nalini Sharma  
Ms. Irene Galan  
Mr. Nasrudin Abdi Rashid  
Mr. Alvin Gachie  
Mr. Richard Miesen  
Ms. Pia Kohler  
Ms. Kaai Tung Chan  
Mr. Zhanyun Wang

**Regret**

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