

Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in preparation of the Second Session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG 2) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

7 September 2023

08:00 – 18:00 (Bangkok, Thailand; GMT +7)

In-person / hybrid meeting [Bangkok]

Meeting Summary

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

1. Mr. Jinhui Li, Bureau member of the OEWG and Chair of the regional meeting, opened the meeting, and welcomed all participants.
2. Mr. Li congratulated Ms. Tessa Goverse on her appointment as head of the SPP OEWG Secretariat.
3. The meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.
4. Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the OEWG, welcomed all participants, thanked the Government of Japan for their generous contribution to the organization of the regional meeting, and appraised the good cooperation between the OEWG and the Minamata Secretariats. Given the short intersessional period ahead, Ms. Alkemade encouraged the participants to make considerable progress at OEWG 2.

Agenda item 2: Recap of UNEA Resolution 5/8 and summary of the first session of the Open-ended Working Group

5. The Secretariat provided a recap of UNEA Resolution 5/8, the overall timeline of the OEWG process, and a summary of the outcomes of OEWG 1.1 and 1.2.
6. One observer commented that the science-policy panel should have good coordination mechanisms with existing institutions such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to ensure its added value without duplication of existing efforts.
7. Another observer commented that most developing countries do not have infrastructure to support assessments and highlighted the need for strengthening capacities of local organizations (e.g., national governments supporting local data generation) and for raising the profile of science in national and local policy implementation.

Agenda item 3: Organizational matters for the second session of the Open-ended Working Group

8. The Secretariat introduced the document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/7 Draft update from the secretariat on intersessional work undertaken since OEWG1.2, budget and expenditure and the provisional workplan*.¹ The Secretariat presented an overview of the Bureau and regional meetings as well as intersessional outreach activities and the revised budget.
9. One Member State asked if the minutes of the Bureau meetings were available. They also asked

¹ Refer to the Pre-Session Documents uploaded on the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting event page available at [this link](#).

about the organization of contact groups at OEWG 2. The Secretariat clarified that the minutes of all Bureau meeting are available at the Bureau meeting website² and that the organization of contact groups at OEWG 2 will be discussed at the upcoming Bureau meetings.

10. The Secretariat then presented the working documents *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/1 Draft annotated agenda for OEWG 2*, the *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/INF/1 Draft scenario note*, and the document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/2 Proposed draft skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel*, including a visual of how the working and information documents being prepared for OEWG 2 connect to the draft skeleton outline.³
11. The Secretariat further presented document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/3 Draft scope and objective, functions, and operating principles*.⁴
12. One Member State asked for clarification on possible financial mechanisms for supporting developing countries to implement the outcomes of the OEWG process. The Secretariat clarified that financial arrangement of the panel is one of the elements to be considered at OEWG 2 under institutional arrangements.
13. Another Member State asked how the written submissions solicited on the needs and questions that the panel may handle will be used in the OEWG process. The Secretariat clarified that the call for written submission was the result of a request made by OEWG 1.2. All submissions received would be made available on the OEWG website. They would be summarized and analyzed into an information document to help inform the discussion at OEWG 2, particularly with regard to scope and work-related processes and procedures. Submissions were still being received as the deadline for written submission had been extended to 22 September 2023.
14. One Member State voiced support for the establishment of the panel. With regard to the panel's scope, the Member State highlighted that the future panel should focus on chemicals and waste, without duplication of the work of existing institutions, such as the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee which is the body to assess nominated Persistent Organic Pollutants candidates. With regard to the panel's functions, the Member State highlighted the importance of capacity building, in light of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and considering all forms of capacity building such as financial assistance, technical assistance and technology transfer, to enhance the capacity of developing countries.
15. One observer emphasized the need for "inclusiveness" as an operating principle of the panel and for having Indigenous Peoples' perspective in the panel's operations. The observer also highlighted two good examples of including youth under the Global Environment Outlook (GEO), namely the GEO fellowship programme and the GEO-6 for Youth, an initiative from the youth.
16. One observer suggested that the science-policy interface should include tri-partite communication among scientists–policymakers–people (which include vulnerable populations and individuals). The observer also highlighted that sustainable financing is a major issue and suggested using the Polluter Pay Principle to address this issue.
17. The Secretariat presented document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/4 Draft institutional arrangements and rules of procedure for sessions of the plenary*, highlighting common features of institutional arrangements of existing science-policy interfaces and table of content of rules of procedure.⁵

² <https://www.unep.org/oewg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution/bureau/bureau-meetings>

³ Supra 1 at 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

18. One Member State commented that the arrangements of the panel should be voluntary and flexible, allowing different countries to set up their own mechanisms to support the implementation of the panel.
19. One observer noted that representation of the private sector and civil society were absent in the figure shown in the Secretariat presentation and asked how these stakeholders' interests may be reflected in the panel's operations. The Secretariat clarified that relationships with relevant key stakeholders is a substantive matter to be addressed at OEWG 2 which would result in further guidance on the matter.
20. The Secretariat next presented document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/5 Draft relationships with relevant key stakeholders*, which addresses three core questions ("who are stakeholders to the panel?", "what roles that stakeholders may generally undertake in the panel's operation?" and "how can stakeholders participate in the panel?") as well as a proposal on the way forward.⁶
21. One observer suggested using the term of "major groups and civil society organizations" instead of "civil society organizations."
22. The Secretariat next presented document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6 Draft overview of work related processes and procedures*, which addresses the process for determining and executing the work programme of the panel, procedures for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the panel, arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts to contribute to the work of the panel, and conflicts of interest policy.⁷
23. One Member State commented that the approval of reports and how to choose the topic for reports is important and asked for clarifications on whether the prioritization of topics will be discussed at OEWG 2 and whether information on the prioritization process under existing interfaces will be provided. The Secretariat responded that the prioritization process was indeed a substantive matter to be considered at OEWG 2, with an information document being prepared, building on examples under existing interfaces.
24. Several Member States emphasized the need for ensuring the participation of developing country experts. The Secretariat took due note and further clarified that co-design with end users and those who may be impacted by the interface was one important lesson learned from existing interfaces. In particular, the Secretariat noted several other interfaces have established guidance on how to include Indigenous Peoples, and many studies highlighted the importance of casting a wide net to engage experts, including end users and those who may be impacted. The Secretariat noted lessons learned could be considered by the OEWG during its deliberation.
25. One Member State asked for clarifications on the use of the term "life cycle approach" in the title of one of the side events, noting that the term is not used in UNEA resolution 5/8. The Secretariat clarified that the side event aimed to engage the resources community and thus used the term to build linkages with that community.
26. One Member State commented that for development of work programmes, every stakeholder should be able to submit proposals. The Member State further highlighted that it would be key to have clear information requirements for new proposals, and clear criteria and guidance on who will review the proposals leading up to the new work programmes.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Agenda item 4: Logistical preparations for the second session of the Open-ended Working Group

27. The Secretariat reported that invitations to OEWG 2, taking place from 9 to 15 December 2023 in Dead Sea, Jordan, have been sent out. The Secretariat further highlighted the key registration deadlines of 30 September for funded travel and of 31 October for all other participants.
28. One Member State asked for clarification on the planning for events on 9 and 10 December, prior to the official opening of OEWG 2. The Secretariat clarified that regional meetings were scheduled on 10 December, and that the schedule for 9 December was still under discussion with the Bureau and would be communicated to Member States and other stakeholders as early as possible.

Agenda item 5: Other matters

29. No other matter was raised.

Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting

30. The Chair closed the meeting at 15:30 (GMT +7).