

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
31 January 2024
16:00 - 17:30 (EAT; GMT + 3)
Online meeting

Draft 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 representative from the World Health Organization (WHO) participating as an Observer suggested to update under Other Matters on relevant developments in WHO.
3. The meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.
4. The Chair invited Bureau Members to endorse the summary of the Bureau meeting held on 14 November 2023 as prepared by the Secretariat.
5. The Bureau endorsed the summary without any changes.

Agenda item 2: Reflections on the outcome of OEWG 2

6. The Secretariat briefly presented an overview of the outcomes of OEWG 2.
7. Bureau members welcomed the good progress made during the meeting, highlighting that still a lot of work remains to be done at the third session.
8. Bureau members provided the following reflections on the outcome of OEWG 2:
 - The usefulness of informal and regional consultations held intersessionally.
 - The usefulness of working from document INF/10/Rev.1 leading to well-structured discussions in the contact groups.
 - The need for clear mandates for the contact groups and to prioritize work that needs to be undertaken during OEWG 3. A lesson learned from OEWG 2 was to avoid overlapping mandates to prevent renegotiating outcomes of one contact group in another contact group.
 - Importance to keep in mind the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/8.
 - The 90 mins dedicated timeslots for the contact group sessions worked well.
 - The importance of reaching out to as many members as possible to enhance participation of governments in the ad hoc open-ended working group.
 - The importance of delegations to remain respectful despite different opinions and that all have a role to follow up if delegates are not treated with respect.
9. The observer from WHO noted that outcome of OEWG 2 will need to be carefully reviewed to ensure that the health sector is fully reflected and some of the content needs to be further detailed including on relationship with relevant stakeholders.
10. The Secretariat highlighted the valuable guidance provided by the Bureau in advance of the meeting and at the daily Bureau meetings during OEWG 2 and that positive feedback had been received on the informal consultations held in advance of the meeting.
11. The Bureau agreed to keep in mind the lessons learned for preparations for OEWG 3.

Agenda item 3: Organization of OEWG 3

12. The Secretariat presented an [update on the preparations for OEWG-3](#), taking into account the

outcome of OEWG 2, including the requested intersessional work:

a. Documentation: working documents and information documents

13. Bureau members provided initial feedback on the overview of topics to be addressed in the working documents suggested to the Secretariat.

14. Following exchange on the need to compile all the working documents in one single document for consideration of OEWG 3, Bureau members agreed – pending feedback by their regions – to request the Secretariat to prepare the annexes requested to be prepared for OEWG 3 as Addendum documents to the outcome document of OEWG 2.

15. One member further noted to expect high level information in the proposed document on procedures for the determination of the panel’s work programme (document 6 in the presentation), and not too much detail which will require time for negotiations.

16. Upon request of one member, the Secretariat confirmed that the document on Rules of Procedures and the conflict-of-interest form will draw upon best practices from other science-policy interfaces.

17. Bureau members further agreed to the proposed working documents to be considered for the preparations of the Intergovernmental Meeting. These documents will include timelines as well as possible interim arrangements (including for the Secretariat) that need to be made. The outlines of these documents will be discussed in more detail at a next Bureau meeting.

18. Upon request of the observer from WHO, the Secretariat provided clarity on the existence of the mandate for the Executive Director to organize the Intergovernmental Meeting. It was agreed that the legal offices of UNEP and WHO will work together to look at the different options and potential barriers for WHO’s engagement.

19. The Bureau tentatively agreed to the proposed information documents. The Bureau was requested to provide any additional written input to the Secretariat by 9 February 2024.

b. Planned webinars

20. The Secretariat provided an overview of the webinars requested by OEWG 2 and suggested adding a webinar organized by the Geneva Environment Network for a final briefing prior to OEWG 3.

21. Bureau members generally agreed with the proposed timelines and subjects for webinars, and identified the need for a dedicated a webinars to present a general overview and background on the OEWG process for potential newcomers in the process.

22. In addition to this familiarization webinar, the other webinar would cover:

- OEWG-3 documentation (possible in two parts, separating the working documents relevant for the preparations for OEWG-3 from those focused on the Intergovernmental meeting and beyond)
- capacity building (as also requested by OEWG 2)

23. The Bureau welcomed and agreed with the proposed timelines for webinars prior to OEWG 3.

c. Regional consultations

24. The Secretariat provided an overview of the planned period for regional consultations in the lead up to OEWG-3.

25. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to reach out to the respective Bureau members from each region on potential dates, venue and formal for the regional consultations.

d. Logistics

26. The Secretariat provided an overview of the preparations for the OEWG-3 meeting that will be held 17 - 21 June 2024, in Geneva, including preceding regional, informal and stakeholder consultations on 16 June 2024. The timelines for registration, 31 March 2024, and the deadline for requesting funded travel, 11 March 2024, were shared as well.

27. The Bureau welcomed the preparations for OEWG 3 and for the meeting to be held from 17 – 21 June 2024 in Geneva, hosted by the government of Switzerland.

e. Budget

28. The Secretariat presented an overview of the approved and available budget for 2024, highlighting a funding gap of USD 1.48 million.

29. The bureau took note of the budget deficit and agreed to discuss the budget and expenditures in more detail at a next bureau meeting.

Agenda item 4: Planning for Bureau meetings

30. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to suggest dates for future Bureau meetings, especially those potentially held in the margins of UNEA-6 and INC, as well as in May 2024.

Agenda item 5: Other Matters

31. The Observer from the WHO updated on the positive reception of the proposed options of engagement of WHO in the OEWG process by the meeting of the WHO Executive Board held in January 2024, and informed the Bureau that they intend to organize a webinar on the science-policy panel at their upcoming WHO Chemicals and Health Network meeting from 20 – 22 February 2024 for which they invite the Chair and the Secretariat to participate.

32. It was furthermore discussed and agreed that WHO will work with the Secretariat to develop an information document on the possible options of engagement in more detail for consideration by members of the OEWG.

Agenda item 6: Closing of the meeting.

33. The Chair closed the meeting at 18:15 (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
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
Prof. Jinhui Li, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University, China
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
Mr. Alexandru Roznov, Assistant Counsellor, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania
Mr. Roman Filonenko, Senior Specialist of the Environmental Safety Division of the Government of Ukraine
Ms. Judith Torres, International Relations and Cooperation Office of the Ministry of the Environment, Uruguay

Observers

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
Ms. Viviane Treves

Regrets

Mr. Cyrus Mageria, Ag. Director MEAs, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya
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
H.E. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Ambassador of Pakistan to Germany