

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 September 2024
15:00 - 17:30 (EAT), virtual

Meeting Summary

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

1. The Chair, Ms. Gudi Alkemade, opened the meeting at 15:00 EAT, thanked the Bureau Members and OEWG 3.1 facilitators for their participation in OEWG 3.1, and introduced the provisional agenda, which was adopted without change.

Agenda item 2: Reflections from OEWG 3.1

2. The Chair recalled the ambitious agenda for OEWG 3.1 and its conclusion to resume the third session of OEWG (to be held back-to-back with the Intergovernmental Meeting) to finalize the foundational document and the draft rules of procedure (and the relevant draft decisions/recommendations of the Intergovernmental Meeting). Welcoming the OEWG 3.1 facilitators invited to the first part of the Bureau meeting, she emphasized the importance of sharing reflections and lessons learned between Bureau members and facilitators, to be considered to prepare for the resumed session of OEWG3.

3. Bureau members and facilitators shared their individual reflections and lessons learned. These included the following:

- The workload of OEWG 3.1 may have been underestimated and there is a need to focus the resumed session on the key elements required to establish the science-policy panel.
- The small group discussions to focus on specific elements of the text helped to unlock discussions and make further progress.
- Though time was not sufficient to enhance all texts on policies and procedures of the panel, the discussions were useful to better understand the different positions (for example on who can make submissions for the work program).
- some discussions may have been influenced by the positions of Member States on similar issues when discussed in the context of MEAs.
- The high-level representation of both WHO and UNEP, as well as their messaging was appreciated, though the timing of the message of the ED UNEP may have come rather late in the process.
- The following key issues were identified as being central to unblocking negotiations and making progress:
 - Membership of the panel's bodies.
 - Decision-making processes.
 - Hosting arrangements for the secretariat (including involvement of WHO).
 - Operating principles.

- Going forward, it will be important to:
 - Strategically consider the order of issues to be discussed at the resumed session, taking into account that resolution for some of the issues, may help unlock discussions on other issues, to make efficient use of the time available.
 - Ensure/facilitate exchange between co-facilitators.
 - Continue engagement, including through informal outreach and consultations intersessionally.
 - Continue to facilitate regional consultations to prepare for the meetings.

The chair confirmed that the resumed session will focus on the finalization of the foundational document and the draft Rules of Procedures, including the relevant decisions to establish the panel and that she would be available for informal outreach intersessionally.

4. The secretariat further noted that OEWG 3.1 did advance in many areas and that, in addition to the key issues identified by Bureau members, other issues where Member States have different views may be resolved by finding appropriate language. The secretariat stressed the interrelated nature of some issues across the two documents to be finalized (foundational document and Rules of Procedure) and underscored the need for a targeted engagement strategy in the run up to OEWG 3.2.

Agenda item 3: OEWG 3.2 preparations

a. Key issues to be addressed at OEWG 3.2

5. The secretariat provided a high-level summary of the key outstanding issues identified for resolution at OEWG 3.2, based on an internal analysis and feedback received from the Bureau related to:

- Operating principles and approaches
- Membership of the panel
- Decision-making of the panel
- Roles of stakeholders
- Conduct of meetings
- Financial arrangements

6. Participants provided additional input relevant to the preparations of the resumed session, including:

- The need to prepare well for the discussions and look at specific text and options to address different points of view.
- The need to develop a common understanding of the minimum requirements to establish the panel, vis a vis what can be left to the panel to decide, including the possibility to leave the hosting arrangements for the secretariat to the panel to decide.
- Consideration of how to engage high-level participation from UNEP and WHO
- The need for intersessional informal consultations

7. The Chair noted that if the secretariat hosting arrangements are to be decided by the first (enabling) meeting of the panel's governing body, interim arrangements will need to be

prepared and presented at the intergovernmental meeting on the entity to provide secretariat services to prepare for the first (enabling) meeting of the panel's governing body.

8. Closing the discussion on this item, the Chair thanked facilitators for joining the first part of the Bureau meeting, noting that they will be invited to future meetings.

b. OEWG 3.2 roadmap

9. The secretariat presented a draft roadmap to OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting, including proposed dates for Bureau meetings and webinars and an option for a preparatory meeting in November and a Heads of Delegation meeting end of December 2024 or early 2025.

10. Bureau members provided initial feedback on the proposed roadmap, including:

- Informal indications of offers from China and one country from the GRULAC region to host the back-to-back OEWG 3.2 and Intergovernmental Meeting.
- The possible need for more time to prepare for the meetings, including considering holidays such as the Chinese New Year.
- Questions about the necessity/usefulness and cost implications of a Heads of Delegation meeting.
- Concerns about the number of webinars and the need for more clarity on the topics to be addressed.
- Questions about the timing of the first enabling session of the panel's governing body.

11. The Bureau took note of the offers to host the OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting and requested the Secretariat discuss bilaterally on host country arrangements as needed.

12. Regarding the timing of the first session of the panel's governing body, the secretariat explained that adequate time (approximately 6 months) will be needed to organize the session following the establishment of the panel.

13. The Chair concluded that the draft roadmap was initially positively received, and that the secretariat in its next iteration was requested to provide more information on the content and objectives of the proposed webinars, and to look at further options for organizing the meetings later in 2025, and that the Bureau questioned the usefulness of the proposed Head of Delegation meeting, whereas informal consultations were seen as important to prepare for the meeting. Bureau members were invited to solicit further input from their regions on the proposed roadmap and provide feedback to the secretariat, preferably by 20 September.

14. The Chair confirmed that from November onwards she would be available for informal consultations in preparation for OEWG 3.2, which the Bureau Members appreciated. They reiterated that this effort should be pursued, and that the Bureau would support this endeavour.

15. Responding to a question about the status of the Bureau after OEWG 3.2, the Chair explained that when OEWG finishes its work, the Bureau dissolves and the Intergovernmental Meeting will elect its own officers at the start of the meeting.

c. Documentation

16. The secretariat presented an overview of the documentation for OEWG 3.2.

17. Following questions, it was agreed that the Secretariat will amend the overview to better align with the outcomes of OEWG3.1 and reflect their content.

d. Budget and resource mobilization

18. The secretariat provided an update on budget requirements and resource mobilization efforts. Key points of discussion included:

- Suggestions for broader resource mobilization efforts, including reaching out beyond environment ministries;
- Clarifications on the assumptions used for costing OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting, particularly regarding support for developing countries, including their high-level representatives.
- The need for clear communication to member states about who can be supported.
- Requests for more detailed information on participant numbers and costs from OEWG 2 and OEWG 3.1 for comparison.

19. The Bureau agreed that the provisional budget may be used by the Secretariat to mobilize resources for the organization of the resumed OEWG3 and the Intergovernmental Meeting. The Secretariat was requested to include the OEWG 2 and OEWG 3.1 expenditures for comparison and potential revisiting the budget at the next meeting.

20. The secretariat thanked China and the Member State from the GRULAC region for considering hosting offers and the Bureau members for supporting the provisional budget for use for resource mobilization purposes. The Secretariat also thanked the Switzerland for the pledge that had the previous day been received.

Agenda item 4: Other Matters

21. The Chair announced that her contact details have changed and that updated details will be shared with the Bureau.

Agenda item 5: Closing of the meeting

22. The meeting ended at 18:15 EAT.

Participants

Bureau members

Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG

Mr. Oumar Diaouré Cisse, Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG 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 SPP OEWG and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University, China

H.E. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Ambassador of Pakistan to Germany

Mr. Michel Tschirren, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Senior Policy Advisor at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland

Mr. Alexandru Roznov, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Assistant Counsellor, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania

Mr. Roman Filonenko, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Senior Specialist of the Environmental Safety Division of the Government of Ukraine

Ms. Judith Torres, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and International Relations and Cooperation Office of the Ministry of the Environment, Uruguay

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

UNEP

Ms. Tessa Goverse

Ms. Nalini Sharma

Mr. Stadler Trengove

Mr. Ulf Bjornholm

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez

Ms. Irene Galan

Mr. Alvin Gachie

Mr. Richard Miesen

Ms. Pia Kohler

Ms. Kaai Tung Chan

Mr. Zhanyun Wang

Mr. Didier Salzmänn

Mr. Gricha Zurita

Observer

Ms. Lesley Onyon, World Health Organization (observer)

Invited facilitators

Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi

Ms. Toks Akinseye

Mr. Miguel Ruiz Botero

Ms. Itsuki Kuroda

Ms. Kateřina Šebková

Ms. Sofia Tingstorp

Regrets

Ms. Linda Kosgei, Rapporteur of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Head of MEAs, Ministry

of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya