

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 (SPP OEWG)

15 January 2025

15:30 - 16:30 (EAT; GMT + 3) virtual

### **Meeting Summary**

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

1. The Chair, Ms. Gudi Alkemade, opened the meeting and introduced the provisional agenda. At the request of one member, the Bureau agreed to consider under agenda item 3(b) the roadmap towards OEWG 3.2 and under agenda item 4, the engagement of WHO, with the understanding that these issues will be further addressed at the next Bureau meeting. The agenda was adopted with these amendments.

#### **Agenda item 2: Adoption of the meeting summary**

2. The summary of the ad hoc Bureau meeting held on 9 December 2024 was adopted without any comments.

#### **Agenda item 3: OEWG 3.2 preparations**

##### **(a) Dates and venue of the OEWG 3.2**

3. With reference made to the pre-meeting documentation, the Chair highlighted the state of play on the offers to host the OEWG 3.2 and the Intergovernmental Meeting (IM), urging the Bureau to conclude on its recommendation on the meeting dates and venue and ensure that governments can prepare for the meeting. She invited the representatives from the governments of China and Uruguay to update the Bureau on the latest developments.

4. Prof. Li confirmed the withdrawal of China's offer and expressed support for Uruguay to host the meetings.

5. Ms. Torres confirmed Uruguay's offer to host the meetings from 14 – 20 June 2025 and the availability of the meeting venue in Punta del Este. She informed the Bureau that a donor had made a pledge for a financial contribution to support their offer. She further confirmed that the newly elected government is preparing to take office from March, which leaves adequate time to prepare for the meetings.

6. In the further discussion on the dates and venue the following points were raised:

- The dates overlap with the dates of the 62<sup>nd</sup> sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies meetings scheduled for 16 – 26 June in Bonn.
- The dates are close to the meeting of the OEWG of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), currently scheduled to take place from 22 – 27 June in Nairobi.

- The importance to respond to host country offers as a sign of ownership of the process and that it is unfortunate that it was not possible to capitalize on the offer made by the Government of China.
- The need to consider the cost-effectiveness, practicalities and the ecological footprint of the meetings.
- The possibility of Uruguay and China co-hosting the meetings in Punta del Este.

7. The secretariat further clarified their rationale in looking at potential dates for the meetings, considering the guidance from the Bureau to keep momentum in the process. Apart from the offers by the potential host countries, the secretariat had also explored the availability of the UN venues, considering the international calendar.

8. The Chair recalled that at its meeting on 9 December 2024, the Bureau had agreed to the fallback dates of 14 – 20 June, either in Punta del Este or in Nairobi, and that the June dates had been on the table since October 2024. She further stressed the importance of deciding on the dates and venue during this meeting and indicated that it will always be difficult to satisfy all parties.

9. UNEP indicated that it would look at the possibility of organizing the SPP meetings back-to-back with the GFC OEWG in Punta del Este, following which Uruguay confirmed the availability of the venue on the dates for GFC OEWG.

10. In conclusion, the Bureau agreed that the OEWG 3.2 and the IM be held from 14 to 20 June in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The Bureau requested the secretariat to communicate the dates and venue of OEWG 3.2 and the IM to the focal points of the SPP OEWG process, prior to sending out the formal invitations.

#### **(b) Organization of work**

11. The secretariat provided a brief overview of the roadmap of key activities to be undertaken in the lead up to the SPP meetings, besides Bureau meetings, informal outreach undertaken by the Chair and the facilitation of online regional meetings (upon request by the regions):

- Webinar on relevant examples from other panels - 23 January 2025
- Informal consultation on scenario note with SPP focal points
- Pre-session briefing

12. With the decision on the dates and venue of the OEWG 3.2 and the IM, the secretariat will present the detailed roadmap at the next Bureau meeting.

13. The secretariat subsequently presented a provisional proposal for the organization of work, including a tentative schedule for OEWG 3.2 and the potential clustering of topics for contact groups. Given the lack of time to discuss the [proposal](#) in detail, the Chair invited Bureau members to seek input from their regions and submit these inputs and suggestions in writing to the secretariat by Wednesday, 22 January COB. The inputs and suggestions can then inform the next iteration of the proposed organization of work for consideration by the Bureau at its next meeting.

14. Furthermore, as requested by one member, the secretariat confirmed its intention to present information on the proposed organization of work for the Intergovernmental Meeting to the Bureau. Keeping in mind the offer of the Bureau to play an advisory role to the UNEP ED on her mandate to convene the Intergovernmental Meeting, it was agreed to include this in the agenda of the next Bureau meeting.

### **(c) Budget**

15. The secretariat provided an update on the budget situation ([see slide](#)), noting that the donor contribution in support of Uruguay's hosting offer had not yet been reflected in the figure pending the outcome of the present Bureau meeting. The Chair noted that the funding gap is slowly closing, however there is still a need for further resource mobilization. She requested the secretariat to continue their efforts to mobilize the necessary resources and invited the Bureau members to also provide suggestions as relevant at the next Bureau meeting.

### **Agenda item 4: Other matters**

16. The Bureau agreed with the suggestion of one member to request the secretariat in its communication to SPP OEWG focal points on the dates and venue of the meetings to encourage governments to ensure continuity in their delegations to the OEWG process.

17. As per the request made under agenda item 1, the secretariat provided a brief overview of WHO engagement in the process of establishing the science-policy panel, including the continuation of regular exchanges between UNEP and WHO and WHO's offer to support the secretariat during OEWG 3.2 with one staff member. The secretariat noted that the WHO Executive Board meeting, scheduled from 3 – 11 February, will consider an update on the OEWG process that WHO prepared in collaboration with the secretariat. Given that WHO was unable to attend the present Bureau meeting, the Chair suggested that WHO engagement is further addressed at the next Bureau meeting.

### **Agenda item 5: Closing of the meeting**

18. The Bureau agreed that its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 18 February 2025 from 15:30 – 17:30 EAT. The meeting was closed at 17:20 EAT.

## **Participants**

### **Bureau members**

Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Policy Coordinator, International Affairs Directorate Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, The Netherlands

Ms. Linda Kosgei, Rapporteur of the Bureau of the SPP OEWG and Head of MEAs, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya, Kenya

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

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, 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, Antigua and Barbuda

### **UNEP SPP Secretariat:**

Ms. Tessa Goverse

Ms. Nalini Sharma

Ms. Irene Galan

Ms. Kaai Tung Chan

Ms. Pia Kohler

Mr. Richard Miesen

Mr. Zhanyun Wang

### **Observer:**

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez, UNEP

## **Regrets**

### **Bureau member:**

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

### **Observer:**

Ms. Lesley Onyon, World Health Organization