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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.

Monday, 26 June 2023

16:00 – 18:00 (EAT)

Online

### **Bureau Summary**

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

1. Mrs. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the OEWG, called the meeting to order and welcomed all participants.
2. The meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.

#### **Agenda item 2: Summary of the bureau meeting on 16 May 2023.**

3. The summary of the previous Bureau meeting was adopted.

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

4. The Secretariat provided an update on the intersessional work leading up to OEWG 2, including webinars, informal consultations and side events that have been undertaken and are upcoming to prepare for OEWG 2 (see [presentation](#) for more details). In particular, the Secretariat is planning to host specific webinars on institutional arrangements, conflict of interest and prioritization framework in July – August 2023 period. The Bureau was also briefed on the annotated outlines of the working documents being prepared for OEWG 2.

5. The Bureau agreed with the planning of the proposed webinars and the timelines for the documents and provided the following overarching comments on the OEWG 2 working documents annotated outlines:

- Overall, the annotated outlines of the OEWG 2 working documents received positive feedback and were considered useful to support the negotiations at OEWG 2.
- Use agreed language from the UNEA resolution 5/8 and ensure consistent cross-referencing throughout the documents, in particular with document 2/3 proposed skeleton outline.
- Ensure sufficient time at OEWG 2 for elements that have not been discussed thus far.
- Requested the Secretariat to prepare a document highlighting the elements and sub-elements that are necessary to establish the Panel, and the elements that would be nice to have at the close of the OEWG process but could be developed by the Panel itself.

6. The Secretariat thanked the Bureau for the positive feedback and took note of the overarching comments provided. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to make a proposal for the must-have and nice-to-have elements for consideration at the next Bureau meeting. This may serve as a basis for preparing the scenario note and annotated agenda for OEWG 2.

7. On document OEWG 2/3 Proposed Skeleton Outline, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to finalize the document, including making a proposal on which elements in the skeleton outline should be finalized by the OEWG and which other elements could be finalized by the Panel itself, once established.

In addition, they requested that the document indicates, which text will be negotiated at OEWG 2 and OEWG 3.

8. On document OEWG 2/4 Scope, objective, functions, and operating principles, the Secretariat reported that following the webinar on operating principles, 55 submissions were received, 27 from Member States and 28 from stakeholders. The secretariat further indicated that an information document will be prepared to include mapping of capacity building activities under existing instruments and that a call for submissions on capacity building will be prepared. The Bureau requested when the submissions on operating principles and a summary analysis will be made available to OEWG. They requested the Secretariat to include cross-references to the report from OEWG1.2 (OEWG1/7), including the outcomes on scope, objective and functions, and the issues in the “parking lot” (as set out in paragraph 80 of the OEWG1.2 report).

9. The Secretariat confirmed that submissions on operating principles will be posted online by the end of the week (now available on [OEWG2 page](#)). The summary analysis will be presented in document OEWG 2/4, and further details will be presented in an information document for OEWG 2. The Secretariat further clarified that the “parking lot” was addressed in the background document of the *Operating Principles* prepared for the April 2023 webinar and that is serving as the basis for the information document being prepared for OEWG 2.

10. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to finalize the working document taking into account the comments provided.

11. The Bureau made the following comments on document OEWG 2/5 Institutional Arrangements and Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the Plenary:

- Underlined the importance of consistency of the document with Resolution 5/8, in particular paragraphs 5 and 6, including in the section on Partnership Arrangements with paras 6(d) and 6(e).
- Include examples of subsidiary bodies and their associated budgetary and financing implications, possibly in an annex.
- Requested to critically assess what elements of the institutional arrangements should be in the main document rather than in an annex, of the proposals for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting, as currently laid out in the proposed skeleton outline document. Suggested to have an analysis of the main elements of the architecture of the panel in the working document and include other entities’ experiences in the information document.
- Requested to provide examples on financial arrangements, that could inform Member States on how best to ensure a functioning panel and taking into account the fact that chemicals, waste and pollution is not a priority in many countries.
- Underscored the need to clarify the decision-making structure for products of the Panel. In response, the Secretariat clarified that document OEWG 2/7 on the work-related processes and procedures will address this, including through the work program and prioritization framework and procedures for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the Panel.

12. The Secretariat addressed comments on the structure of this document, including in relation to the skeleton outline, including putting forward options for consideration by OEWG. The Secretariat further confirmed the development of a supporting annex or information document, including budgetary implications.

13. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to finalize the working document taking into account the comments provided.

14. The Bureau made the following comments on document OEWG 2/6 Relationship with relevant key stakeholders:

- Emphasized the importance of this document, and to ensure synergy and cooperation and avoid duplication.
- Requested the Secretariat to provide a proposal on the potential roles, relationship and modalities for engagement between the Panel and relevant stakeholders.
- Stressed the need to include indigenous knowledge. It was suggested to take advantage of existing guidelines on indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledge in environmental assessments.
- Asked for the clarification of a reference to “effectiveness evaluation and scientific literature” in the current annotated outline.
- Requested clarity and cross-references to the information documents, notably regarding how this document related to the skeleton outline (document OEWG 2/3).
- Suggested to include more examples and lessons learned from other processes, such as SAICM or WHO and not only IPBES and IPCC to ensure the information presented is balanced.
- It was furthermore suggested that the proposed Annex 3 builds upon (an updated) document 1/INF4.

15. The Secretariat clarified that proposed *Annex 3* of document OEWG 2/3 aims to address the relationship with key stakeholders, including indigenous knowledge. In addition, the reference to “effectiveness evaluation and scientific literature” will include lessons learned on stakeholder engagement from other existing processes and panels and confirmed that this document will include more examples from other bodies.

16. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to finalize the working document taking into account the comments provided and taking into account the effectiveness evaluations of IPCC and IPBES and other relevant information, examples or scientific literature on what works well, to provide a proposal for the potential roles, relationship and modalities for engagement of the panel with relevant stakeholders, as a basis for the discussions at OEWG 2.

17. The Bureau made the following comments on document OEWG 2/7 Work-Related Processes and Procedures:

- Requested a proposal on the processes and procedures presented in this document that need to be developed during the OEWG process and the processes and procedures that can be developed by the Panel once established.
- On section III on *Arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts to contribute to the work of the panel*, the section should also address criteria for the selection of the experts.
- On section IV on *Procedures for the review and adoption of reports and assessments produced by the panel*, it was suggested to provide a description of the review process, and what does a review process include for the Panel’s products.
- Suggested to include reference to the IPCC’s code of conduct to address complaints and resolve dispute, and WHO’s experience on conflict of interest.
- Noted the different perspectives on Section V on conflict of interest and requested the Secretariat to include options for general guidance on the development of the conflict of interest policy.
- Suggested to add language from paragraph 6 (b) of UNEA resolution 5/8 on interdisciplinary contribution from experts and indigenous people.

18. The Secretariat clarified that the document would draw upon a wide range of examples and that WHO will provide input and review the documents.

19. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to finalize the working document taking into account the comments provided.

#### **Agenda item 4: Indicative budget for 2023**

20. The Secretariat presented the indicative 2023 – 2024 budget, contributions from Member States to date, and expenditures since the start of the OEWG process up to 31 May 2023. Active resource mobilization would be required to ensure sufficient funds are available to finalize the OEWG process. In view of the budgetary situation, the Secretariat proposed that the regional consultations being organized back-to-back with the Minamata COP 5 regional preparatory meetings are held in a hybrid format, with the representatives attending the Minamata regional meetings staying on for an extra day. It was noted that there is limited overlap of focal points amongst the OEWG, Minamata, and ICCM processes. The secretariat proposed that the regional Bureau members would attend in person. Furthermore, the hybrid format would provide an opportunity for more inclusivity and participation of Member States in the consultations and at the same time keeping costs to a reasonable amount.

21. While the budget was not discussed in detail, the Bureau noted the update provided by the Secretariat and the proposal to organize the upcoming regional consultations in hybrid format and made the following comments:

- Due to resource constraint, back-to-back meetings with the Minamata COP 5 regional preparatory meetings and the proposed hybrid meeting mode are supported in principle to save on costs.
- It was however noted that it is important to strike a balance between resources and opportunities, such that OEWG focal points can participate equally.

22. It was agreed that Bureau Members would consult with their regions to seek endorsement of the proposal to organize the regional consultations in hybrid format. The Bureau members were requested to provide feedback on the budget, including the proposal for the regional consultations to be held in hybrid format to the Secretariat by Monday, 3 July, and the Secretariat would circulate a draft decision for the Bureau by Wednesday, 5 July.

#### **Agenda item 5: Engagement of stakeholders in the OEWG meetings and process**

23. The Secretariat presented the background document on the established practices for the participation of accredited representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders in meetings of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies.

24. Following exchange, the Bureau made the following comments:

- The Secretariat should continue to promote and facilitate the engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders in the OEWG process, including other relevant experts and academics, and continue to reach out to relevant networks.
- Supported the organization of webinars to make people aware of the OEWG process and the possibility to participate.
- Stressed the importance of transparency on how stakeholders are accredited to the UNEA process. Agreed to continue the discussion on how relevant stakeholders can be best engaged in the OEWG process.

**Agenda item 6: Organization of work.**

25. The Chair proposed the next bureau meeting should be held on 8 August 2023 at 16:00 – 18:30 (EAT). The Secretariat was also requested to identify possible dates for a hybrid Bureau meeting to be held back-to-back with ICCM5 in Bonn.

**Agenda item 6: Other matters.**

26. The Chair requested the Secretariat to be prepared for a secret ballot election of the Eastern Europe Bureau Members at OEWG 2. The Secretariat confirmed that Ms. Tessa Goverse will be the new Head of the SPP OEWG process.

**Agenda item 6: Closing of the meeting.**

27. The Chair closed the meeting at 19:22 (EAT).

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## **Annex: List of Participants**

### **The OEWG SPP Bureau Members:**

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. 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

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

Mr. Li Jinhui, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Distinguished Professor, School of Environment, Tsinghua University

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. Cyrus Mageria, Director of Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs

Ms. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the OEWG SPP and Permanent Representative of Pakistan 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

### **The UN Environment Programme Secretariat was represented by:**

Ms. Nalini Sharma, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Ms. Pia Kohler, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Mr. Zhanyun Wang, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Ms. Irene Galan, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Ms. Kaai-tung Chan, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Mr. Nasrudin Haji, Secretariat of the SPP OEWG

Ms. Laetitia Zobel, Programme Management Officer, Governance Affairs Office

Ms. Tessa Goverse, Chief of Source to Sea Pollution Unit, Ecosystem Division

Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez, Chief, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry & Economy Division

### **Observers to the meeting**

Ms. Ana Berejiani, Georgia