

Africa Regional Meeting 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  
14 September 2023  
08:00 – 18:00 (EAT; GMT +3)  
In-person [Nairobi]

### **Meeting Summary**

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

1. Mr. Cyrus Mageria, Bureau member of the OEWG and co-chair of the regional meeting, opened the meeting, and welcomed all participants.
2. Mr. Mageria invited all participants to introduce themselves.
3. The meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.
4. Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Chair of the OEWG, gave opening remarks. Given the short intersessional period ahead, Ms. Alkemade emphasized the importance of OEWG 2 in making considerable progress towards the preparations of the outcome document required for the intergovernmental meeting for the establishment of the panel. This regional meeting would serve to provide a clear picture of tasks ahead and information needed for developing proposals to establish the panel so that the Africa region can prepare for the 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 Member State requested clarification on “capacity building,” whether the function is agreed, or the text bracketed. The Secretariat clarified the capacity building has been agreed as a function of the panel as one of the outcomes in OEWG1.2 with the understanding that further discussion is needed on the text.

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

7. 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*.<sup>1</sup> The Secretariat provided an overview of the Bureau and regional meetings as well as intersessional outreach activities. The Secretariat further presented a revised budget for OEWG.
8. One observer pointed out that existing science-policy interfaces have been criticized and lessons should be learnt from them. For example, the lack of representation of the developing world, e.g., Africa, in literature and the development of assessment reports. The observer further suggested that there is a need to diversify funding sources. The secretariat responded that it was aware that

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Pre-Session Documents uploaded on the Africa Regional Meeting event page available at [this link](#).

effectiveness evaluation of existing panels has been conducted and that the lessons learnt from existing panels are reflected in the working documents for this meeting. Information documents that supplement the working documents will be made available in due course. With regard to the diversification of funding sources, the secretariat responded that financial arrangement is an element of the institutional arrangements for consideration for the establishment of the panel.

9. One Member State requested elaboration on outreach activities to broader stakeholders, considering gender mainstreaming and education to raise awareness. Another observer asked about the participation of youth in the OEWG process. The secretariat responded that inclusivity is a key consideration in the work of the panel through the engagement of stakeholders. Widespread outreach has been put in place to engage a wider audience, which includes major group stakeholders, academia, and stakeholders accredited to other institutions such as WHO and ILO. Webinar content is available online for public access.
10. One Member State requested clarification about the relationship between the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC) and the science-policy panel. The Secretariat responded that the INC secretariat and the OEWG secretariat maintain regular contact to ensure progress of the discussions in both fora on the science-policy interface is being communicated.
11. One observer asked for clarification on whether the panel would have a mechanism to avoid duplication of efforts of existing instruments/ panels working in similar areas. The observer further requested clarification on how the panel will mainstream Indigenous knowledge. The secretariat responded that it recognizes the need to avoid duplication and benefit from existing panels by learning from their lessons. With regard to mainstreaming indigenous knowledge, the secretariat has taken note of relevant mechanism by existing science-policy interfaces such as IPBES and GEO.
12. One observer asked if there was a role for the private sector in the OEWG process. The secretariat responded that on the issue of chemicals, waste, and prevention of pollution, it is important for the panel to be informed by the private sector and also engage in finding ways to address the issues. All stakeholders who are engaged in this issue, including the private sector, would have a role to play in the Panel.
13. 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.<sup>2</sup>
14. The Secretariat further presented document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/3 Draft scope and objective, functions, and operating principles*.<sup>3</sup>
15. One observer made a statement on the importance of ensuring legitimacy, inclusivity and transparency of the panel.
16. Another observer questioned the meaning of “strengthen” in the objective of the panel. The observer suggested referring to SAICM’s approach to bringing in every stakeholder to bridge science and policy. The secretariat responded that the objective of the panel will need to be operationalized taking into account credibility, legitimacy, relevance and inclusivity. The examples on the working documents have also made reference to SAICM’s mechanism to engage

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

stakeholders.

17. One observer suggested allocating intersessional meetings targeted for major groups and stakeholders to enhance their representation. The secretariat responded that a webinar on how stakeholders can engage in the process was under preparation.
18. Another observer questioned what the panel will do to strengthen the communication with the Indigenous community. The secretariat responded that inclusion of Indigenous knowledge is a main ask to the panel and the secretariat it is reviewing existing examples from other science-policy interfaces.
19. One observer made a statement on the importance of protection of human health.
20. The Secretariat presented the 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 and a common outline of rules of procedure shared by existing science-policy interfaces.<sup>4</sup>
21. The Secretariat subsequently presented the document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/5 Draft relationships with relevant key stakeholders*, which addresses the 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.<sup>5</sup>
22. One observer asked if there is a document that address specific stakeholders, e.g., Indigenous people. The secretariat responded that the working document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/5* has been prepared to describe the relationship of the panel with relevant key stakeholders.<sup>6</sup> The document will be supplemented by an information document.
23. One observer inquired if the OEWG 2 meeting could be hybrid and accessed online. The secretariat informed that OEWG 2 will be an in-person meeting with live streaming of the plenary sessions. Regarding the mode of meetings, the secretariat has responded to Member States and Bureau’s requests. The UNEA rules of procedure are followed regarding the organization of OEWG 2 and the regional meetings. More information on the second session can be found on the event website.<sup>7</sup>
24. The Secretariat presented the document *UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.2/6 Draft overview of work-related processes and procedures*, including 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.<sup>8</sup>
25. One Member State requested clarification on the definition of conflict of interest. The secretariat informed that examples of how conflict of interest is defined in other science/policy interfaces are provided in the working document, supplemented by an information document.
26. One observer requested clarification on major groups and stakeholder engagement to the OEWG process, and when there are input and suggestions, whether the process of providing input follow UNEA rules of procedures, and whether non-accredited stakeholders can engage in the process.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> The event website can be found at [this link](#).

<sup>8</sup> Supra 1 at 1.

The secretariat clarified that the OEWG is operating under the UNEA rules of procedure. To keep stakeholders abreast of the OEWG process, the plenary meeting at OEWG 2 will be live-streamed. One way to broaden the stakeholders' engagement is that stakeholders accredited to other bodies, e.g., WHO, ILO, are also invited to participate in the OEWG process.

27. One observer expressed concern over the issue of improper disposal of pharmaceutical products. It was suggested that the panel should work with WHO and include this topic in future discussions of the work of the panel.
28. Another observer emphasized the importance of collaboration between existing science policy interfaces on promoting gender balance, Indigenous and local knowledge, youth engagement, etc.
29. One observer asked if stakeholders could provide input regarding conflict of interest to prepare for OEWG 2. The secretariat noted that a webinar on this topic will be organized, and input from the discussion could be included in the information document. There is however a tight timeline for the preparation of working documents before OEWG 2.

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

30. The Secretariat reported that invitations to OEWG 2, taking place from 11 to 15 December 2023 in Dead Sea, Jordan, were sent out. OEWG 2 will be preceded by meetings of regional and other groups on 9 and 10 December. The Secretariat highlighted the key registration deadlines of 30 September 2023 for funded travel and of 31 October 2023 for all other participants.<sup>9</sup>
31. Several questions were raised regarding the logistics of the OEWG 2 meetings, including visa restriction to some African countries by the host country and criteria for funded travel. The secretariat informed that Jordan, the host country, will be responsible for the visa approvals. With regard to funded travel, a maximum of one representative from each eligible Member State will be sponsored, and there will be some funding for sponsoring major groups and stakeholders. UNEA rules will be applied, and a logistics note to the meeting will be made available soon.<sup>10</sup>
32. To facilitate the circulation of information, the Chair encouraged Member States to nominate national focal points to the OEWG if they have not already done so.

#### **Agenda item 5: Other matters**

33. No other matter was raised. The secretariat informed that the meeting documents for this regional meeting are available online as unedited advance version to facilitate the preparations for the regional meeting. Meeting documents for the OEWG 2 will be posted on the dedicated meeting website in the six UN languages once they are available.

#### **Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting**

34. The co-chair closed the meeting at 14:30 (GMT +3).

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<sup>9</sup> Supra 7 at 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.