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Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

International cooperation and coordination

**Update on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals
Management and the intersessional process considering the
Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals
and waste beyond 2020**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out an update on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme, which serves as the secretariat for the Strategic Approach. The update is presented as received, without formal editing.

* The resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury is to convene in person in Bali, Indonesia, and is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2022.

** UNEP/MC/COP.4/1.

Annex

Update on SAICM and the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

I. Introduction

1. This report presents an update on SAICM Secretariat activities since November 2019 and the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. The fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) scheduled for March 2020, and the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) scheduled for October 2020 have been postponed due the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

II. SAICM Secretariat activities since November 2019

2. The third meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP3) was held from 1 to 4 October 2019 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. Regional meetings and technical briefings were held on 30 September 2019. These meetings supported the stakeholders in their efforts to elaborate the future arrangements of the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration at the next session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5).

3. The report of this meeting is available [here](#).

III. Postponement of IP4 and ICCM5

4. At the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG-3) held from 2 to 4 April 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay, the Government of Romania announced their offer to host of the Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) in March 2020 in Bucharest, Romania. The fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), was scheduled to take place from 5 to 9 October 2020 in Bonn, Germany.

5. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties regarding the medium- and long-term development of the pandemic, these meetings were rescheduled to March 2021 and July 2021, respectively.

6. Following this postponement, and with the continuing situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICCM5 Bureau agreed to further postpone the face-to-face fourth meeting of the Intersessional Process (IP4) and the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5). Notification on this decision was circulated to SAICM stakeholders on 1 February 2021 and is available [here](#).

IV. Establishment of virtual working groups

7. With restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of the fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) and the fifth session of the International conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), the ICCM5 Bureau and the co-chairs of the intersessional process proposed to establish a number of Virtual Working Groups (VWGs) to support the work of the intersessional process to advance deliberations on the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

8. The purpose of the proposed VWGs was to develop proposals for tangible outcomes including notes identifying gaps, compromise text proposals, and new or alternate text, as appropriate. The VWGs were not intended to replace formal face-to-face discussions at IP4 and/or negotiations that will take place at ICCM5 but rather are intended to further build understanding and prepare delegates for these important negotiations.

9. The VWGs were established to work on the following issues:
 - (i) Targets, indicators and milestones;
 - (ii) Governance and mechanisms to support implementation;
 - (iii) Issues of concern; and
 - (iv) Financial considerations.
10. An online survey was developed to gather information on stakeholders' experiences and views to inform the design of future work in the intersessional process until the time when face-to-face meetings are feasible. The survey was launched and circulated to all SAICM stakeholders in all 6 UN languages and the deadline for completion was 16 July 2021. The data gathered from the survey will be used to develop an assessment of the experiences with the virtual work undertaken between October 2020 to February 2021.
11. The Co-facilitators reports on the outcomes of the VWGs held between October 2020 to February 2021 are available [here](#).
12. Regional briefings will be held on 7 and 8 September 2021 to inform the regions on the results of the survey, provide an opportunity to the regions to provide feedback on the virtual work and discuss regional perspectives amongst themselves. Information on the regional briefings can be found [here](#).

V. Establishment of the ICCM5 High-Level Declaration (HLD) informal drafting group

13. The ICCM5 President established a process for the development of a possible ICCM5 High-level Declaration with guidance from the ICCM5 Bureau. A High-level Declaration informal drafting group was established in September 2020 to compile, organize and synthesize input, views and proposals from SAICM stakeholders that could inform the scope, structure and content of a possible High-level Declaration on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. These proposals will inform (among other proposals) the work of an envisaged drafting group to be formally established at the rescheduled IP4 (or ICCM5, as the case may be) for consideration by the envisioned ICCM5 High-level Segment.
14. Information related to the HLD informal drafting group, including the Co-facilitator's final report is available [here](#).

VI. Knowledge Management platform of SAICM and the Communities of Practice

15. The SAICM Secretariat launched an online Knowledge Platform available at www.saicmknowledge.org. This new platform is a one-stop shop on up-to-date information about SAICM emerging policy issues with resources and publications, news and opinion articles, chemicals and waste-related events and communities of practice for exchanging with other stakeholders on the sound management of chemicals and waste and related linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. The platform was created to ensure that knowledge and information on chemicals management are available, accessible, user-friendly, adequate and appropriate amongst all SAICM stakeholders.
16. Four Communities of Practice (CoPs) have been established to support an effective global network of experts on Emerging Policy Issues (EPIs) with a space for regular knowledge exchanges and long-term engagement. Members of these Communities of Practice are representatives from academia, governments, industry, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, consumers, and citizens. Within the SAICM Communities of Practice, stakeholders come together regularly to exchange and discuss their knowledge, best practices and experiences on the sound management of chemicals and waste. The four SAICM Communities of Practice were established in partnership along with the University of Cape Town (UCT) and have more than 900 members registered to-date. We encourage stakeholders and interested public to join the Communities of Practices and to submit any technical input or publication to be uploaded and disseminated through the Knowledge Management platform. Further information on the communities of practice is available [here](#).

VII. ICCM procedural, organizational and administrative decisions adopted via a silent procedure

17. The President of the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) circulated a draft decision on 10 November 2020 to enable the ICCM to take a limited number of procedural decisions on organizational, administrative and budgetary matters in order to ensure that continuation of its mandated activities and those of the SAICM secretariat. Since the silent procedure as not be broken by national focal points and no formal objection was received, the decision was considered as adopted.

18. Following the adoption, the Bureau circulated a second draft decision on 10 December 2020 on the 2021 proposed budget for the SAICM secretariat. The 2021 budget for SAICM was adopted on 31 December 2020 via the silence procedure. ICCM5 will take note of these decisions at its next session.

19. The decisions approved via silent procedure can be found [here](#).

VIII. Other SAICM secretariat activities

20. The SAICM secretariat has also been involved in a number of activities as follows:

(i) With the support of the [SAICM GEF 9771 project on Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under SAICM](#), fifteen countries have adopted national legislation to phase-out the use of lead in paint, while 19 countries are at the final stages of drafting lead paint laws. In addition, 45 other countries are being currently assisted by the project for lead paint laws drafting. Similarly, 35 paint producers in seven countries are supported to reformulate their paint to substitute the lead content and fourteen have already completed the reformulation process. Under this project, over 15 knowledge and technical publications on SAICM Emerging Policy Issues have been produced, including a Gender Review Mapping with a Focus on Women and Chemicals on the Impact of Emerging Policy Issues and the Relevance for the Sustainable Development Goals available [here](#).

(ii) The SAICM Secretariat supported the launch of the new Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform within the margins of this Year's Youth Environment Assembly in February 2021. The online launch event attracted around 100 young people from all UN regions and diverse backgrounds including chemists, social scientists and activists. The platform, which was established by two former SAICM interns under the umbrella of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY), will help to build capacity for young people to engage and influence multilateral decisions on chemicals and wastes issues. Among the primary interests of the youth engaged are the strengthening of the science-policy interface as well as embedding sustainability in curricula and corporate practice.

(iii) A study is being prepared with the objective to outline the scope for implementation of industry involvement within the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste. The study aims to cover the entire life-cycle of chemicals and address both national and international levels. It is developed in response to the independent evaluation of implementation of the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEP/EA.4/INF.16, 2019) that identified gaps in the component concerning industry involvement, including lack of clarity of what counts as industry contributions, absence of a mechanism for tracking activities and financial flows, and poor understanding of industry participation at the national level. The results of this study are intended to provide helpful context for decision-makers in preparing the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5).

(iv) The Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability hosted by the Government of Germany was held on 7-8 July 2021, with participation of the German Chancellor, Ministers of Environment, Health and Labour, the UN Secretary-General, Heads of UN Organizations and Agencies, the Executive Secretaries of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention and the Minamata Convention, amongst other dignitaries. ICCM5 President committed to continue implementing SAICM and to incorporate the results of Berlin Forum in the Chair Summary into the ICCM5 negotiation process. Proceedings of the Forum can be found here: <https://www.bmu.de/en/berlin-forum-on-chemicals-and-sustainability/#c59730>.

(v) The SAICM Secretariat provided communication and outreach guidance and support to the World Future Council (WFC) in preparation for the Future Policy Award 2021, which was presented on the sidelines of the Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability held 7-8 July. The goal of the annual WFC award is to recognize innovative laws and policy measures and raise awareness of them worldwide. The 2021 award focused **the most effective policy solutions that minimise the adverse effects of exposure to chemicals on human health, with a focus on children's health, and the**

environment. For more information on the award 2021:
<https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/future-policy-award-ceremony-2021/>.

IX. Next steps

21. The ICCM5 Bureau is working on developing a Programme of Work and budget to continue implementation of SAICM until the face to face ICCM5 is feasible as well as securing and supporting the finalization of the ICCM4 mandate to prepare recommendations on the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste. Discussions are ongoing regarding future virtual work and will be informed by the results of the survey and the regional briefings.
