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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 activities of the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management since August 2021 and on the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. The fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management is scheduled to be held from 25 to 29 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany. The annex is presented as received, without formal editing.

* UNEP/MC/COP.5/1.

Annex*

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

I. Introduction

1. This report presents an update on SAICM Secretariat activities since August 2021 and the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. The fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) is scheduled for 25 – 29 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany.

II. SAICM secretariat activities since August 2021

2. Continued Secretariat Services were provided to facilitate the SAICM process with organizing the Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4), held in Bucharest, Romania from 29 August to 2 September 2022. The meeting was adjourned and resumed in Nairobi, Kenya from 27 February to 3 March 2023. Information on the meeting can be found [here](#).

3. The IP4 meeting 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 fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5).

4. The report of the IP4 Bucharest meeting can be found [here](#). The meeting report from the Nairobi meeting is forthcoming.

5. In November 2022, IP Co-Chairs proposed a consultation process in preparation of the resumed IP4 to assist and stimulate stakeholders to consider some strategic high-level reflections and questions in their preparatory processes for finalizing the recommended “beyond 2020” instrument/framework. The information on the consultation process as well as documents and feedback provided by stakeholders are available on a dedicated SAICM webpage [here](#). A number of Regional meetings and briefings were held in 2022 and 2023 in support of the Intersessional Process.

6. Additional SAICM Secretariat activities included the development of the Knowledge Management platform as well as the SAICM Communities of Practice, stakeholder and sectoral engagement strategy and the project on global implementation of GHS which are described in the following items.

III. Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

7. The IP4 meeting was held in Bucharest, Romania, from 29 August to 2 September 2022. During the meeting any essential elements of a recommended future instrument were incorporated into a single consolidated document. The language was made more understandable, clearer, and concise. Progress was made in reducing the number of targets and incorporating many new ideas and concepts raised since the third intersessional process (IP 3) meeting held in October 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. However, despite intensive efforts undertaken in Bucharest, it was not possible to complete the intersessional process (IP) mandate. Therefore, during the plenary session held on Friday, 2 September 2022, the IP Co-Chairs outlined a proposal to adjourn IP4 and resume in early 2023, with a view to concluding consideration of the IP4 agenda. This proposal was accepted by the participants.

8. The Nairobi resumed IP4 meeting established thematic groups and Friends of the Cochairs with the objective to review the single consolidated document and to delete as many brackets as possible and consider restructuring some of its parts with a view to enhance the overall coherence and readability of the document. Approximately 400 delegates attended, representing governments,

* The annex has not been formally edited.

intergovernmental organizations, industry, civil society organizations and other constituencies including children and youth.

9. While significant progress was made on some parts of the text such as introduction and mechanisms to support implementation, there is still some significant work to be done on other parts such as targets and financial considerations. Therefore, the IP Co-Chairs outlined a proposal on 3 March 2023 to re-adjourn the Intersessional Process and reconvene two days before ICCM5 in Bonn, Germany on 23 and 24 September 2023. The Intersessional Process Consolidated Document can be found [here](#).

IV. Regional meetings

10. Following the 19th and 20th meetings of the ICCM5 Bureau held on 15 February 2022 and 15 March 2022 respectively, it was agreed to held Regional Meetings and a Roadmap towards IP4 and ICCM5 was agreed and presented at the Regional Meetings.

11. Additionally, a table comparing the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy, SAICM/IP.4/2 “Compilation of recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020” and the outcomes of the Virtual Working Groups was developed and presented at the regional meetings. These documents were the bases for the discussion during the regional meetings.

12. The 5 SAICM Regional meetings were successfully held as follows:

- (a) Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Meeting, in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 6 to 7 May 2022.
- (b) Central and Eastern Europe Regional Meeting, in Prague, Czech Republic, from 12 to 13 May 2022,
- (c) EU-JUSSCANNZUK Regional Meeting, online, 23 June 2022,
- (d) Africa Regional Meeting, in Accra, Ghana, from 27 to 29 June 2022
- (e) Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in Dead Sea, Jordan, 5 - 7 July 2022

13. The objectives of the regional meeting were to undertake strategic discussions to prepare for the fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, including on:

- (a) The outcomes of the Virtual Working Groups held between October 2020 – February 2021 and
- (b) IP3 outcome text not considered during the Virtual Working Groups on vision, scope, principles and approaches, and strategic objectives.

14. The Regional meetings facilitated the exchange of regional information and knowledge, reviewing progress towards the current SAICM objectives.

15. Around 160 participants actively took part in the four in-person meetings and several dozen took part in the virtual EU-JUSSCANNZUK meeting, as well as followed other regional meeting online.

V. 2023 online regional briefings in preparation of the resumed IP4 meeting

16. In preparation of the resumed Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 27 February to 3 March 2023, the SAICM Secretariat organized a series of online regional briefings in advance of the meeting with the following objectives:

- (a) To inform the regions on progress of the IP Co-Chairs consultation process;
- (b) To prepare for the resumed IP4 meeting, including presentation of the meeting documents;
- (c) To give regions the opportunity to provide feedback to the SAICM Secretariat and IP Co-chairs; and
- (d) To give regions the opportunity to discuss their perspectives amongst themselves.

17. The Briefings were held online on the following dates:
 - (a) Asia-Pacific: 25 January 2023,
 - (b) Latin American and Caribbean: 25 January 2023,
 - (c) Africa: 26 January 2023,
 - (d) Central and Eastern Europe: 26 January 2023,
 - (e) EU-JUSSCANNZUK: 9 February 2023.
18. Around 250 participants actively took part in the five online briefings.
19. Following the discussion held at the ICCM5 Bureau meeting that took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 22-23 June 2023, and in preparation of the resumed Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 to be held in Bonn, Germany from 23 to 24 September 2023, the SAICM Secretariat organized five IP Co-Chairs virtual briefings. The main objectives of this briefing were:
 - (a) To clarify to the participants the process for preparing IP Co-Chairs non-papers to facilitate the achievement of consensus at the resumed Fourth meeting;
 - (b) To give an opportunity to indicate outstanding sticking points for participants.
20. The virtual briefings were held online on the following dates:
 - (a) Africa: 13 July 2023,
 - (b) Asia-Pacific: 14 July 2023,
 - (c) Central and Eastern Europe: 14 July 2023,
 - (d) EU-JUSSCANNZUK: 14 July 2023,
 - (e) Latin American and Caribbean: 17 July 2023.
21. Around 190 participants actively took part in the five online briefings.

VI. SAICM Knowledge Platform and Communities of Practice on EPIs

22. The SAICM Knowledge Management Platform (KM) continues to support knowledge and information sharing amongst SAICM Stakeholders. The platform hosts more than 600 resources, publications, databases and e-learning opportunities on chemicals and waste for dissemination amongst governments, industry representatives, academia and civil society. The platform also provides access to four communities of practice for online discussions on related topics.
23. A new version of the SAICM KM platform was launched in October 2022. It has a new layout, look and feel and enhanced features. In addition, the CMS has been migrated to the latest Drupal 9 version. In parallel, a ChatBot -Virtual Intelligent Assistant - is being developed to be embedded within the platform by the end of 2022. This ChatBot will enhance the user experience by responding automatically to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and connecting users with relevant information available in other databases and websites.
24. The SAICM Knowledge Management platform has been developed under the framework of the GEF project ID 9771 on 'Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under SAICM', funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
25. Under the knowledge management activities of the SAICM GEF project and in partnership with the University of Cape Town (UCT), four Communities of Practice (CoP) were established on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, Chemicals in Products, Lead in Paint and Chemicals & SDGs. From July to December 2022, 11 online discussions were hosted on the following topics:
 - (a) Capacity building – tools that are used
 - (b) Preparing for the 10th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
 - (c) The role of focal points in Highly Hazardous Pesticides management
 - (d) Plastics waste and chemicals
 - (e) Chemicals management toolkit

- (f) Hearing from farmer groups on why Highly Hazardous Pesticides are used
 - (g) Chemicals regulation and public procurement
 - (h) Compliance with Lead Paint laws
 - (i) Environmental injustice issues to consider for chemical risk management
 - (j) Rights-based approach to highly hazardous pesticides management
 - (k) The importance of farmer and farmer organizations
26. Summaries of these discussions are all available [here](#).

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

27. 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.
28. Following the adjournment of the Fourth Meeting of the Intersessional Process held in Bucharest, Romania, the Bureau circulated a fourth draft decision on 10 October 2022 on the adjournment and resumption of the Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. Such decision was adopted on 30 October 2022 via the silence procedure. ICCM5 will take note of these decisions at its next session.
29. The decisions approved via silent procedure can be found [here](#).

VIII. Other SAICM secretariat activities

30. As part of the SAICM Programme of Work (PoW) 2021-2023, the SAICM Secretariat signed an agreement with UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) for the development of a study to inform the capacity-building strategy for SAICM beyond 2020 and for a review of existing reporting mechanisms to measure progress and proposal for the SAICM beyond 2020 framework. An information document detailing the outline of the reporting mechanisms was submitted as an information document for IP4.2. The Capacity-building study will be finalized in the second quarter of 2023. The capacity-building strategy will be submitted for consideration at ICCM5.
31. The project to support “Increasing the global implementation of GHS through a pilot focusing on Africa” was initiated. The 4-year project is co-funded by the European Union and ICCA, with also ECHA, UNITAR, UNEP, and SAICM partnering in the project to support Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d’Ivoire in their GHS implementation journey. The full fledge proposal has been approved by the European Commission in June 2022. The project was kicked off with an inception workshop in Nairobi, Kenya from 4 to 5 October 2022. In parallel, a consulting company (RPA) has been hired to develop implementation roadmaps for the 4 recipient countries. Work Package 1, Definition of Country Baselines, in under way.
32. An E-learning Course on Industrial Chemicals Databases and Information Sharing has been launched. The course provides guidance on locating and using information on industrial chemicals in commerce and identifies some barriers to identifying and using chemicals data and defines areas where more information is required. It also presents the key findings of the related study published by UNEP and the ICCA, upon which the course is based. The content includes four lessons: Introduction to Chemicals Databases and Information Sharing Page, Information Portals, Chemicals Databases, Regulatory Decisions Information Sources. The e-learning course on Industrial Chemicals Databases and Information Sharing has been deployed on InforMEA platform under the category Chemicals and Waste. The course is directly accessible [here](#).
33. The SAICM Secretariat is undertaking a Study on Industry Involvement in the Integrated Approach to Financing the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste. The objective of the study is to provide clarity with respect to the activities that could be undertaken, at various levels, to implement the industry involvement component of the integrated approach. The study also seeks to elaborate on the possibilities for monitoring industry involvement in conjunction with the

framework/instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, with a view to increasing international accountability in relation to industry involvement. The study does not aim to provide definitive answers about the scope of and the precise activities that constitute industry involvement. Instead, it aims to give helpful context and recommendations to support decision-making on industry involvement in preparation for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. It can also be used as input for the development of guidelines on implementing industry involvement. Additionally, the study can inform discussions on financing in relation to the framework/instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

IX. Next steps

34. The ICCM5 Bureau and IP Co-Chairs are working on the finalization of the ICCM4 mandate on the development of a recommended future SAICM successor and preparation of the ICCM5 meeting in Bonn.
