



Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference
on Chemicals Management
First meeting
Belgrade, 15–18 November 2011

Draft report of the work of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its first meeting

Introduction

1. By its resolution II/6, the International Conference on Chemicals Management established the Open-ended Working Group as its subsidiary body. The Conference recognized that there was a need to ensure the comprehensive and effective preparation of its sessions, and agreed that the groundwork for those sessions would be carried out by the Open-ended Working Group, which would meet a few months before each session.

I. Opening of the meeting

2. The first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management was held at the Sava Centar in Belgrade from 15 to 18 November 2011. It was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 15 November 2011, by Mr. Ivan Eržen (Slovenia), President of the Conference, who welcomed the representatives to Serbia.

3. Opening and welcoming statements were delivered by Mr. Oliver Dulić, Minister of Environment of Serbia, and Mr. Tim Kasten, Head, Chemicals Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

4. In his statement, Mr. Dulić drew attention to the goal set out in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development that, by 2020, chemicals would be used and produced in ways that would lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. He stressed the importance of attaining that goal, pointing out that, although at its nineteenth session the Commission on Sustainable Development had recognized that significant progress had been made, there remained much to be done to ensure the environmentally sound use and management of chemicals throughout their life cycle in accordance with the principle of sustainable development. The international policy framework around sound management of chemicals needed to be strengthened, and the full and effective implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was an important tool in doing so.

5. He gave a number of examples to demonstrate his country's commitment to sound chemicals management and the implementation of the Strategic Approach. In conclusion, he called for the current meeting to be a significant step in the preparations for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, suggesting that it should contribute to the implementation and enhancement of

12. Closure of the meeting.

B. Organization of work

1. Attendance

10. The following governmental representatives were represented: *[To be completed]*
11. The following governmental representatives were represented as observers: *[To be completed]*
12. The following intergovernmental representatives were represented: *[To be completed]*
13. The following non-governmental representatives were represented: *[To be completed]*

2. Officers

14. As the rules of procedure of the International Conference on Chemicals Management applied *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the Working Group, the Bureau elected at the second session of the Conference was to serve during the current meeting. During the period since the second session of the Conference, however, a number of the officers elected by the Conference were replaced by their Governments or regional groups: Mr. Carlos Portales (Chile) was replaced by Mr. Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez; Mr. Eisaku Toda (Japan) was replaced by Mr. Teruyoshi Hayamizu; and Mr. Victor Escobar Paredes (Spain) was replaced by Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden). Mr. Cheikh Ndiaye Sylla (Senegal) was unable to attend and by Ms. Fagamou Sy acted in his stead.

15. Accordingly, the following representatives served as the officers of the Working Group:

President:	Mr. Ivan Eržen (Slovenia)
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. Osvaldo Álvarez-Pérez (Chile)
	Mr. Teruyoshi Hayamizu (Japan)
	Ms. Fagamou Sy (Senegal)
	Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden)

16. Mr. Hayamizu served as rapporteur.

3. Organization of work

17. In carrying out its work at the current meeting, the Working Group had before it working and information documents pertaining to the various items on the meeting agenda. Those documents, listed according to the agenda items to which they pertain, are set out in annex [] to the present report.

18. The Working Group agreed to work in plenary session each day of the meeting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., subject to adjustment as necessary, and to establish small groups as it considered necessary. It also agreed that the current meeting would be a paperless one; except upon request, documents would accordingly be distributed in electronic form only.

4. Statements on the objectives of the meeting

19. A number of representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, made general statements on the issues to be discussed during the meeting. Statements on behalf of regional groups of countries were made first, followed by statements by representatives of individual countries and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

20. Representatives speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States voiced full commitment to the Strategic Approach and expressed thanks to all those involved in organizing the current meeting, which would play an important role in preparing for the third session of the Conference. They said that there was a need for a reporting system that would enable progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach to be tracked, and also called for due account to be taken of the work of other processes and international instruments while encouraging synergies with them. In conclusion, they welcomed the decisions on synergies adopted by the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants at their recent meetings, calling for them to feed directly into the third session of the Conference. They also welcomed

for more effective implementation of the Strategic Approach. In that regard, a number of representatives described national-level implementation efforts.

28. Another representative said that attention should be paid to countries' economic situations and needs, as developed and developing countries were often on an unequal footing when it came to the implementation of sound chemicals management. Priority should be accorded to developing solutions to the challenges faced, while bearing in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Capacity-building for developing countries was crucial. Another representative called for the Working Group to have a clear and precise vision to ensure that developing countries would have the means to manage chemicals correctly. In that regard, any financial mechanism to be adopted by the Conference should be solid and transparent and complemented by a programme of work that would provide countries with the capacities to implement activities and ensure sound chemicals management.

29. Two representatives said that it was important for the current meeting to lay the groundwork for the third session of the Conference, suggesting that that session would be crucial in coordinating efforts to attain the 2020 goal by further developing the implementation of the Strategic Approach. One said that the success of projects under the Quick Start Programme in catalysing multi-stakeholder action should inspire donor Governments to increase their financial contributions, welcoming those projects that had helped to build an enabling environment in developing countries. He called for the Programme and its trust fund to be extended, given that there was a need to put in place a long-term, global financial mechanism to make available predictable funding to ensure a sustainable and toxic-free future for all.

III. Setting priorities and meeting goals

30. Introducing the item, the President set out his plans and general expectations for the meeting, as described in the scenario note (SAICM/OEWG.1/2).

31. The Working Group took note of the information provided.

IV. Overview of activities under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management for the period 2009–2011

32. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat described activities under the Strategic Approach for the period 2009–2011, as set out in the note by the secretariat (SAICM/OEWG.1/3).

33. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, drew attention to activities to implement the Strategic Approach and to improve chemicals management undertaken by industry and at the regional and national levels since the second session of the Conference. Several welcomed the work by the secretariat at the regional level, describing the meetings held to date as of great importance to the implementation of the Strategic Approach as they provided a platform to exchange ideas and discuss specific issues in detail, thereby enhancing participation in, for example, sessions of the Conference. They expressed thanks to all those involved in organizing the regional meetings.

34. The Working Group took note of the information provided and commended the secretariat on its efforts over the period since the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

V. Implementation of the Strategic Approach

A. Evaluation of and guidance on the implementation, review and updating of the Strategic Approach

1. Reporting on progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach

35. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat presented the note by the secretariat providing an overview of the work carried out by the secretariat in preparation for the evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach (SAICM/OEWG.1/4) and information documents relating to baseline and preliminary data collection made using the online reporting tool, in addition to a summary of the data collected from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and information on progress in implementing the Strategic Approach

2. Addition of activities to the Global Plan of Action

44. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat noted that the proposal by the Government of Switzerland to add nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials as a new work area to the Global Plan of Action had originally been presented at the second session of the Conference. The second proposed addition to the Global Plan of Action, on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electric and electronic products, had been developed at the fourth African regional meeting on the Strategic Approach.

45. In the ensuing discussion, most of the representatives who took the floor spoke in favour of the inclusion of activities on the two areas in the Global Plan of Action, after taking account of amendments put forward by representatives at regional meetings held over the past months, some adding that they might have specific amendments to the proposed list of activities. A number, however, emphasized the importance of taking into account other work being undertaken on the issues under consideration and said that there was a need to avoid duplication.

46. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that support should be provided to developing countries to manage nanomaterials, build capacity and develop risk management tools. Others said that it was important to share information and risk data. One welcomed efforts to increase the understanding of the environmental health and safety implications of nanomaterials by information sharing, welcoming in that regard the awareness-raising workshops conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

47. One representative said that further analysis was needed before nanotechnology activities could be included in the Global Plan. The issue was not as mature as that of hazardous substances, where considerable experience had been gained in sound management and relevant legislation drafted. Another suggested that it was premature to consider new areas of work under the Global Plan when the Overarching Policy Strategy had not yet been fully implemented.

48. One representative said that continuing work on hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products stood as a good example of how the Strategic Approach community could work together to solve problems; another said that it highlighted the important link between chemicals and waste management. One welcomed the addition of a new work area on that issue to the Global Plan of Action as it would encourage Governments, industry and other stakeholders to take up initiatives related to e-waste in support of the Strategic Approach objectives.

49. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the procedure approved by the Conference at its second session for the inclusion of new activities in the Global Plan of Action, which constituted an important step for ensuring that emerging issues were fully reflected in the Plan and that it remained up to date. Another said that it was important to weigh proposed activities against the criteria set out in the procedure, especially their relevance and cost-effectiveness.

50. A number of representatives drew attention to the difficulty of separating discussion of the addition of work areas to the Global Plan of Actions from the consideration of emerging policy issues under agenda item 5 (c). One called for clarity on the methodology used in considering additions to the Global Plan of Action and emerging policy issues and several cautioned against confusion between the two. Some suggested that international activities should be continued on the projects that required a global approach, even if they had been taken from emerging policy issues and incorporated into the Global Plan of Action.

51. The Working Group agreed to resume its consideration of the item after having considered agenda item 5 (c).

52. *[To be completed]*

B. Financial and technical resources for implementation

1. Update on the Quick Start Programme

53. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat presented the notes by the secretariat providing an update on the Quick Start Programme (SAICM/OEWG.1/5) and on the status of the Quick Start Programme (SAICM/OEWG.1/INF/12/Rev.1). She drew attention to the need to tackle the issue of disbursement of funds beyond November 2013 to allow for all activities under the projects in the Programme portfolio to be completed.

2. Managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives63. *[To be completed]***3. Nominated new emerging policy issues**64. *[To be completed]***VI. Health sector strategy**65. *[To be completed]***VII. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**66. *[To be completed]***VIII. Planned activities and draft budget of the secretariat for the period 2013–2015**67. *[To be completed]***IX. Preparations for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management**68. *[To be completed]***X. Other matters**69. *[To be completed]***XI. Adoption of the report**70. *[To be completed]***XII. Closure of the meeting**71. *[To be completed]*
