

Workshop on strengthening governance for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

From concepts to implementation

Room XI, **ILO offices** (4 route des Morillons, CH-1211, Genève 22, Switzerland)

9 and 10 September 2019

Information Note

Background

Governance-related issues related to the “Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020” have been the focus of several recent studies and international discussions, and are expected again to receive significant attention at the upcoming meeting of the [intersessional process \(IP3\) in Bangkok, Thailand, 1 – 4 October 2019](#).

Diverse definitions of governance exist, but common themes include: (1) who participates in the decision-making process; (2) where and how are decisions taken; and (3) how is ownership and accountability organized and ensured. Taking these topics to international chemicals and waste management, questions such as the following arise:

- How can all key sectors be effectively engaged in international chemicals and waste management and how can their engagement be organized and incentivized?
- How can the full participation of relevant international bodies, including secretariats of international agreements, be fostered?
- How can voluntary action beyond compliance, including standard-setting and private sector engagement be encouraged, recognised and advanced internationally?
- How can international decision-making body(ies) and processes generate the required high-level political commitment, wide ownership and effective accountability?
- How can country-driven, regional and international processes be fostered to contribute to and allow tracking of implementation of global targets?
- How can science for policy be aligned and promoted?

The intersessional process (as well as the third session of the Open-ended Working Group, OEWG3, Uruguay) has taken up these matters, supported by other stakeholder groups and meetings. At OEWG3, a technical briefing on “An Improved Enabling Framework on Chemicals and Waste” took place. This

briefing highlighted some areas that may need to be emphasised, including work on issues of concern, reporting mechanisms, science for policy, and the need for increased funding. The briefing also considered the relevance of high-level political support, such as through a UN General Assembly resolution, linking to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and ministerial declarations. At OEWG3, a point was also made that “some of the persistent challenges that [SAICM has] faced stemmed from institutional fragmentation”. Related to this, several representatives supported the development of a broader, global strategy or framework that encompassed both voluntary and legally-binding arrangements.

Workshop objectives

To help address these and other relevant questions, and as a contribution to support the intersessional process and the broader discussion on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, UNITAR is organizing a workshop on related governance topics. The workshop is supported by the Government of Germany and will take place in Geneva, Switzerland from 9 to 10 September 2019, hosted at the ILO. It complements an earlier workshop on this topic organized by UNITAR, which took place from 28 February to 1 March 2019.

Building on the earlier workshop and relevant discussion at the OEWG meeting in Uruguay, this workshop has the overall goal to further inform international deliberations on governance aspects of international chemicals and waste management. It will be specific in nature and focus on the updated paper for a governance structure developed with support of the German Government and prepared in an open and collaborative fashion. This international workshop provides stakeholders a further opportunity to discuss, contribute to and inform the final development of this paper, as it makes its contribution to the intersessional process. The workshop recognises that governance takes place at several, interconnected levels (e.g. national, regional and global) and through stakeholder networks and initiatives (e.g. private sector governance).

Relevance of the workshop for chemicals and waste governance

While taking into account governance aspects relevant to SAICM as it is today, the workshop discusses and seeks to generate outcomes relevant for a wider range of agreements and bodies engaged in the broader sound management of chemicals and waste, going beyond one single instrument or organisation. Results of the workshop are expected to inform and provide suggestions to inform governance-related discussions during the intersessional process on SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. As a main output of the workshop, a document summarizing key outcomes will be shared at several relevant meetings, and with relevant bodies.¹ More specifically, the results will be presented at the third meeting of the intersessional process.

¹ As an example, such a document was submitted to the third Open-ended Working Group of the ICCM following the stakeholder workshop on strengthening governance for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020: <http://saicm.org/Portals/12/Documents/meetings/OEWG3/inf/OEWG3-INF-35-UNITAR.pdf>

Workshop programme and methodology

The workshop takes place over one and a half days, divided into sessions.

Session 1 provides background on the intersessional process on SAICM and chemicals and waste management beyond 2020 and an introduction to the current paper on governance.

Subsequent sessions work through the components of the paper for a governance structure sequentially:

2. Shared vision, priority, ambitious goals and targets
3. Improving policy coherence, synergies and efficiency
4. Building capacity and mobilising resources for multi-sector and stakeholder cooperation and action
5. Strengthening the science-policy interface
6. Review and follow-up
7. The enabling framework within the UN system

Through a mix of plenary discussions and working groups, participants will be provided with an opportunity to share their experiences, develop a deeper understanding of a proposed governance approach, and identify options and suggestions that can be brought forward to the IP3 and beyond. Details of working groups will be available at a later date.

Participants and collaboration

The workshop will bring together approximately 40 experts from around the world. This includes representatives from a cross-section of national focal points, NGOs and industry representatives, as well as from the secretariats of SAICM, BRS and Minamata, regional focal points, ICCM5 Bureau members, IOMC and UN organizations.

About UNITAR's support to the intersessional process

UNITAR has run workshops over the last four years that have encouraged discussion on chemicals and waste, in relation to the SDGs and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020: in April 2016, UNITAR hosted a workshop on the sustainable development goals and sound management of chemicals and waste; in January 2018, UNITAR organized a workshop on lessons-learned from the Aichi Targets and the biodiversity cluster; and in [February and March 2019, UNITAR arranged a meeting](#) on lessons-learned on governance and supporting mechanisms.

Contacts

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