

Global Consultation on chemicals and waste Issues of Concern

11-12 July 2023, Geneva, Switzerland at the Centre International de Conference de Genève (CICG).
Draft EU/MS LTT

Background and aim. At the UNEA-5.2, Resolution 5/7 requested the Executive Director to seek views from Member States and other stakeholders on priorities for further work, building on existing measures and initiatives, and on potential further international action on the issues discussed in the Assessment Report on Issues of Concern. The resolution also requested the preparation of a summary analysis, taking into account the views received. Further details on UNEPs response to this resolution is [available here](#).

This Global Consultation aims to gather information about the priorities for further work and potential further international action on the 19 Issues of Concern of the Assessment Report on Issues of Concern ([available here](#)). The Global Consultation will further elaborate on initial findings from the call for written inputs. The Issues of Concern to be discussed include the 11 issues with emerging evidence of risks identified by the Global Chemicals Outlook II and the 8 emerging policy issues and other issues of concern identified under the Strategic Approach.

The provisional agenda and other meeting documents will be shared with registered participants as they become available.

General draft LTT

The EU/MS are positive to the consultation on Issues of concern. EU/MS believe that it is a need to coordinate the work of the issues of concern and priorities for the future.

1. Priorities for further work and potential further international action on the 19 Issues of Concern of the Assessment Report on Issues of Concern.

Background

In 2019, UNEA resolution 4/8 requested the development of the 2020 UNEP "Assessment Report on Issues of Concern: Chemicals and Waste Issues Posing Risks to Human Health and the Environment". The report assesses the eight [emerging policy issues and other issues of concern](#) identified under SAICM. It reviews how current regulatory and policy frameworks address them by specific instruments and actions, building on the "2019 Global Chemicals Outlook II (GCO-II) findings and highlighting challenges and opportunities. The report also addresses the 11 issues with emerging evidence of risks identified by the governments and intergovernmental institutions in the GCOII so in total there are 19 issues. A set of [19 two-page factsheets](#) summarizes information on the issues.

A "thought starter" on the [identification of issues of concern](#) is presented, including a review of existing approaches, a map of other current relevant initiatives, and considerations of potential areas in which future issues of concern might be identified and possible identification processes. This is followed by an overarching outlook for future international work on issues of concern.

UNEA resolution 5/7 paragraph 19: "request Executive Director to seek views of Member states on potential further international action on the issues discussed in the Assessment Report on Issues of Concern, and on those issues identified in the GCO II.

Draft LTT

The EU/MS agree with the thought starter that there are various mechanisms that can be used to identify issues of concern, such as tracking national regulatory actions, seeking nominations of issues from countries or a wider range of stakeholders, or commissioning experts, via a science policy platform, (SPP) to undertake horizon scanning to identify issues and send early warnings.

EU/MS believe it is important, when selecting issues, to focus on a manageable number of issues and where coordinated global action is needed it should be expressed and considered in relation to impact. We are of the view that important elements are included in the Draft modalities for IoC in the SAICM intersessional process Single consolidated document from 3 March 2023 such as the nomination process, strengthened leadership with working groups and workplans to guide implementation. We note and support the ongoing work for a Global Treaty on Plastics and to establish various set of criteria including for specific polymers and chemicals of concern, or groups of chemicals to be banned or otherwise regulated and to determine and prioritize problematic and avoidable plastic products, including unnecessary or short-lived products.

Regarding PFASs we welcome the phase-out ~~of those identified as POPs to these substances to~~ be achieved through the Stockholm Convention and we would support global approaches to phase out all uses of other PFASs that ~~is-are~~ not necessary for society, including transition to safer safe and sustainable alternatives through the SAICM and its successor.

Considering the future, we can support addressing issues of concern considering a more holistic approach, using a sector-specific value chain approach, grouping substances by similar intrinsic properties, or taking into account all life-cycle stages of specific chemicals and products as the resources for both the international community and many countries are limited, individually addressing issues of concern. Also, we strongly support that efforts on sound chemicals and waste management should be integrated with other environmental and societal priorities (e.g. climate, biodiversity, human rights, labour standards). The future science-policy panel will also be relevant to how IoC can be identified.

2. 11 issues with emerging evidence of risks identified by the Global Chemicals Outlook

Background

The UNEA mandate (res 2/7) requested that the GCO-II address other issues where emerging evidence indicates a risk. The criteria used was identification of recent (since 2010) assessments and regulatory risk management actions taken on a chemical or group of chemicals not already covered by a MEA or SAICM. Using this criteria the following were identified: Arsenic, bisphenol A (BPA), cadmium, glyphosate, lead, microplastics, neonicotinoids, organotins, phthalates, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and triclosan.

According to GQO II, some of these chemicals identified fall squarely within specific issues of concern under SAICM. For example, BPA, tributyltin and multiple phthalates are EDCs; or glyphosate and neonicotinoid may be qualified as HHPs. We would support any further actions to strengthen efforts in addressing these issues through the SAICM and its successor. However, arsenic, cadmium, lead and PAHs are issues that are inadequately addressed by the international community.

I would prefer to delete this wording, (as good as) all PFAS are persistent and could thus be identified as POPs. So I would prefer to keep to wording broad.

: Prefer to remove "other" because to me this wording implies that non persistent PFAS should be phased out

How the 11 issues identified by GCO-II could be further taken up and addressed by the international community has not been discussed within the intersessional process for a new international framework for sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

Draft LTT

The EU/MS note that actions to reduce risks from all these chemicals are important, while some are more relevant for global efforts, for example cadmium, arsenic, and lead. Lead in paints is already identified under SAICM as an IoC, we would support strengthening efforts to ensure a complete phase-out. Extending the scope of this IoC to other uses is an option that should be considered after ICCM5. International concerted actions on cadmium and arsenic through the SAICM successor, should be considered too.

The sources of pollution of arsenic, cadmium, and lead often overlap with those of mercury. Therefore, the Minamata Convention on Mercury serves as a valuable framework, and exploring connections and synergies can offer insights into effectively addressing these interconnected elements on a global scale.

We note that microplastics are included in the ongoing work to establish a Global Treaty on Plastics.

: To further to be noted and elaborated is what kind of global efforts that should be taken in MS view.

3. 8 emerging policy issues and other issues of concern identified under the Strategic Approach

Background

Discussion is currently ongoing regarding SAICM and the new international framework for sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, including on how the 8 existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern could be further addressed.

Draft LTT

Current Emerging Policy/Other Issues of concern should be addressed after ICCM5 in order to not overburden that meeting. EU&MS would support that a proposal for an omnibus resolution includes that existing emerging policy issues and other Issues of concern will be transmitted to the new framework. Reporting on existing issues should be done at ICCM5 but should not be evaluated more at/by ICCM5 to avoid heavy workload at ICCM5.

However, if there is general agreement that certain issues should not be carried over, EU&MS would be flexible to support a decision to that effect. This could be useful to give space for further identified IoC possibly including actions related to some of the issues identified by GCO-II ~~and~~ and/or to recognize that some issues have evolved to be included in Targets or that further global concerted actions for a workplan according to the draft modalities for IoC are difficult to identify.