



Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ENV/CBC(2023)20

For Official Use

English - Or. English

15 December 2023

ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
CHEMICALS AND BIOTECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Supporting the Implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals: a proposal to develop a Declaration to be adopted at the 2024 meeting of the Council at Ministerial level (MCM)

email : [@oecd.org](mailto:secretariat@oecd.org)

JT03534893

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At its February 2024 meeting [ENV/CBC(2024)8, forthcoming], the Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee (CBC) will discuss the role of the OECD in supporting the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals - For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste (GFC)¹, adopted via a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral process in Bonn in September 2023.

In order to support the implementation of the GFC, a Declaration could be adopted at the May 2024 meeting of the Council at Ministerial level (MCM). A first discussion by the CBC at its February 2024 meeting would be too late in terms of timing to finalise such a draft Declaration in time for adoption at the 2024 MCM. Therefore, this document aims to present the background, rationale, and process for developing a Declaration², as well as the proposed draft Declaration, which is set out in Annex A.

Action required: *The Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee is invited to submit comments on the draft Declaration as set out in Annex A by 12 January 2024. A revised version will then be submitted to the Committee for finalisation at its meeting in February 2024 in view of its transmission for adoption by Ministers at the 2024 MCM.*

¹ See advance release [K2319700\[E\] - Global Framework on Chemicals - ADVANCE.pdf \(saicm.org\)](#)

² Note that the cover note to the proposed declaration, in particular paragraphs 15-16, will be updated following the CBC discussion regarding the future role of the OECD's Chemicals Programme in supporting implementation of the GFC [ENV/CBC(2024)8, forthcoming].

1. Following the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals - For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste (GFC) in September 2023, this document presents, in its Annex, the draft Declaration Supporting the Achievement of the Goals of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste, for discussion by the Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee (CBC) for possible adoption at the 2024 meeting of the Council at Ministerial level (MCM).

2. The draft Declaration aims at reaffirming Adherents' commitments to improve the sound management of chemicals and waste as well as the role of the OECD in this regard, in line with the Resolution of the Council on Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management [C(2008)32] (hereafter the "2008 Resolution"), which related to the predecessor of the GFC.

Long-standing role of the OECD in supporting the sound management of chemicals and waste

3. For more than 50 years, the OECD has assisted countries by developing and supporting the implementation of international standards and best practices that make their systems for managing chemicals as efficient and robust as possible, while protecting human health and the environment. Over this time, the Chemicals Programme has developed a solid body of legal instruments to assist countries in establishing and strengthening national regulatory frameworks for chemicals. It has also developed harmonised technical tools, such as test methods, principles of good laboratory practice, and guidance documents for risk assessment and risk management that countries use to implement their chemicals management policies and legislations and ensure the safe use of chemicals. Through the use of these harmonised tools, governments and industry save significant amounts of resources, e.g. by avoiding duplicative testing of chemicals. The savings generated from the use of some of those tools could be quantified and were estimated at 309 Million Euros per year in 2019³.

4. The OECD's work on chemical safety deals with the safe use of chemicals, nanomaterials, advanced materials, pesticides and biocides. It also addresses related areas of concern and interest, such as the prevention of chemical accidents, Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) and Best Available Techniques (BAT) to minimise industrial releases.

5. In addition, the OECD has a tradition of assisting countries in cooperatively addressing emerging issues related to chemical safety that are identified as a collective challenge. This has been the case with manufactured nanomaterials and advanced materials or the assessment of new types of hazards (e.g. endocrine disruption) or particular types of chemicals (e.g. per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances, PFAS). It has also assisted countries in supporting safer substitution and promoting aspects of sustainable chemistry.

6. The OECD legal instruments⁴ related to chemical safety are international standards; while they are legally or politically binding only to OECD Members, any Partner country

³ OECD (2019), Saving Costs in Chemicals Management: How the OECD Ensures Benefits to Society, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311718-en>
<https://www.oecd.org/environment/saving-costs-in-chemicals-management-9789264311718-en.htm>

⁴ Over the years, the OECD has adopted a number of legal instruments dedicated to harmonising and enhancing common practices in countries for implementing chemical safety policies [see <http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/oecdouncilactsrelatedtochemicals.htm>]

can seek adherence to these legal instruments and participation in the related work⁵. The OECD is actively working with Partner countries as well as with other Participating Organisations of the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals⁶ (IOMC) to promote global harmonisation of methods and approaches assisting countries in the development and implementation of their national chemical management systems.

7. Since the adoption of its Strategy on Development in 2012 [C/MIN(2012)6] and of the Joint Meeting Vision for Contributing to the OECD Development Strategy [ENV/JM(2014)2/FINAL] in 2014, the OECD is seeking to strengthen its contribution to improve sound management of chemicals in developing countries, especially via the further development and “on-the-ground” application of the [IOMC Toolbox for Decision-Making in Chemicals Management](#).

Rationale for developing the draft Declaration

OECD's continuous support to SAICM

8. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)⁷ was a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral voluntary agreement developed at the United Nations to support an overall objective of sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health.

9. Following the adoption of SAICM at the First International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1) in 2006, the CBC (at the time Joint Meeting of the Chemicals Committee and the Working Party on Chemicals, Pesticides and Biotechnology) issued a statement in support of SAICM.⁸

10. In addition, the OECD Council adopted a Resolution on Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management [C(2008)32] (hereafter the “2008 Resolution”) on 28 March 2008, which was welcomed by Environment Ministers of OECD Members and major non-Member economies at the meeting of the Environment Policy Committee (EPOC) at Ministerial level on the 28-29 April 2008 at the OECD Headquarters.⁹ The following action items were covered by the Resolution:

- Make implementation of the SAICM objectives, as set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy¹⁰, an integral part of its Chemicals Programme, in particular through work on those elements of the SAICM Global Plan of Action for which OECD is an actor;
- Assist Member countries in their efforts to implement SAICM and work with non-Member Economies in SAICM implementation;

⁵ See Revised resolution of the Council on Partnerships in OECD Bodies [C(2012)100/REV1/FINAL]

⁶ See <https://partnership.who.int/iomc>

⁷ See <https://www.saicm.org/About/Overview/tabid/5522/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁸ See <https://web-archive.oecd.org/2016-11-02/72653-saicm.htm>

⁹ See <https://web-archive.oecd.org/2016-11-02/72653-saicm.htm>

¹⁰ The SAICM objectives, as set out in the Overarching Policy Strategy are grouped in into 5 headings: A. Risk Reduction; B. Knowledge and information; C. Governance; D. Capacity-building and technical operation; E. Illegal international traffic

- Continue to co-operate and co-ordinate with other relevant intergovernmental organisations with regard to successful and timely implementation of SAICM;
- Make the outputs of its Chemicals Programme as accessible, relevant and useful as possible to non-Member Economies and other interested stakeholders, distributing them widely and free of charge; and
- Inform each future meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management of progress made by OECD in SAICM implementation.

11. These action items were then integrated into the subsequent OECD Environment, Health and Safety Programmes (2009-2012; 2013-2016; 2017-2020) and numerous OECD activities have contributed to SAICM implementation in OECD Members and Partners. The progress made with each of the action items of the 2008 Resolution is briefly summarised in [ENV/JM\(2018\)14/REV](#). Additional progress regarding OECD activities on SAICM implementation can be found in two reports submitted by the IOMC to the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management^{11,12}.

12. When discussions on a new Framework started, the CBC discussed in February 2018 the role of the OECD in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 [[ENV/JM\(2018\)14/REV](#)]. At the time, it was envisioned that the role of the OECD¹³ in the implementation of SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 could be to be a:

- leader for the development of worldwide applicable scientific methods and approaches for risk assessment and approaches for risk management of chemicals;
- forum for collaboration on chemical safety policy;
- go-to organisation for collaboration to address emerging policy issues related to the safety of emerging and converging technologies and chemical safety concerns.

Post-SAICM: the 2023 Global Framework for Chemicals (GFC)

13. At the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management in Bonn on 28~~5~~-30~~29~~ September 2023, the Global Framework for on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals Waste¹⁴ was adopted. It outlines the international vision, strategic objectives and targets for chemicals management utilising a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral voluntary approach.

14. The vision - a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste for a safe, healthy and sustainable future – is underpinned by five strategic objectives:

A. Legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities are in place to support and achieve the safe and sustainable management of chemicals throughout their life cycle.

¹¹ Activities of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) to support SAICM Implementation [SAICM_ICCM.5_INF_19.pdf](#)

¹² IOMC Report on SAICM Emerging Policy Issues and Other Issues of Concern [SAICM_ICCM.5_INF_16.pdf](#)

¹³ Note that the OECD shares some of the roles and activities described in this document with those of other Participating Organisations of the IOMC and the OECD will pro-actively seek coordination and collaboration with these organisations on overlapping areas of work.

¹⁴ See advance [K2319700\[E\] - Global Framework on Chemicals - ADVANCE.pdf \(saicm.org\)](#)

B. Comprehensive and sufficient knowledge, data and information are generated, available and accessible to all to enable informed decisions and actions.

C. Issues of concern are identified, prioritized and addressed.

D. Safer alternatives and innovative and sustainable solutions in product value chains are in place so that benefits to human health and the environment are maximized and risks are prevented or, where prevention is not feasible, minimized.

E. Enhanced implementation occurs through increased and effective resource mobilization, partnerships, cooperation, capacity-building, and integration into all relevant decision-making processes.

15. In the [Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#), the ministers, heads of delegation, and stakeholder leaders, having gathered in Bonn, Germany, invite “United Nations entities and other relevant international organizations, including the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, to strengthen their role in generating reliable chemicals- and waste-related data, and to facilitate relevant action and collaboration based on scientific evidence[; and] the governing bodies of those organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, to strengthen their cooperation and coordination to support the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste, and to integrate its goals into their programmes of work and budgets, as appropriate.”¹⁵.

16. In July 2023, the CBC supported the development of a proposal to support the implementation of the new framework, which could include elements to [\[ENV/CBC\(2023\)15\]](#):

- Showcase the work done by the OECD in this area, including through the development and implementation of OECD legal instruments;
- Emphasise how on-going work of the OECD Chemicals Programme contributes to meeting the strategic objectives and targets of the new UN framework, following a crosswalk of the draft 2025-2028 EHS Programme with the agreed objectives and targets.
- In the context of potential implementation programmes set up under the GFC:
 - Highlight the OECD’s work to support the development and enhancement of national frameworks for chemicals management, including through capacity building activities in OECD Members and non-Members.
 - Indicate the OECD’s willingness to collaborate on the development of approaches for greening economic sectors, through the work of the CBC and in collaboration with other intergovernmental organisations.
 - Support the concept of continuing to mainstream chemicals management into discussions of other environmental issues and concerns (Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Circular Economy etc.).
- Indicate OECD’s willingness to continue to be a custodian of certain indicators such as the number of countries that have legislation in place to manage industrial

¹⁵ See paragraph 14 of the [Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#)

and consumer chemicals¹⁶ or the Global Inventory of Pollutant Releases¹⁷, and potentially for select new indicators, for a future measurability of the GFC.

- Indicate the OECD's willingness to engage in addressing issues of concern identified in the context of the GFC and to which the OECD can bring added value. Under the current SAICM, the OECD has been very active in a number of emerging policy issues and issues of concern (Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances, endocrine disrupting chemicals, nanomaterials and nanotechnology, environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants) and it is possible that work on some of these will continue under the GFC and that new issues of concern will be adopted.
- Indicate continued collaboration with other intergovernmental organisations in the context of the Inter-Organisation programme for the sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) to implement the new UN framework.

17. The future role of the CBC and the OECD's Chemicals Programme in supporting the implementation of the GFC will be discussed by the CBC in February 2024 [ENV/CBC(2024)8, forthcoming]. *[This section of the cover note will be revised based upon the results of those discussions].*

An OECD Declaration to support the GFC

18. As was done with the 2008 Resolution, it would be important for OECD Members to reaffirm their commitment as well as the role of the Organisation in supporting the implementation of the new GFC in a comprehensive manner. The adoption of a Declaration at the 2024 MCM would give strong visibility to the work of the OECD, through the CBC in this area and provide orientations to guide the Organisation's future work. In addition, it would demonstrate the OECD's willingness to support the GFC vis-à-vis its long-standing partners, such as other participating organisations of the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)¹⁸.

19. The proposal is to have Members, the European Union and interested non-Members adopt a Declaration on the occasion of the 2024 MCM rather than a Resolution as was done in 2008. The legal nature of Declarations (described in Box 1) is more appropriate in the current circumstances. Indeed, Resolutions are internal decisions (i.e. Acts with obligatory force) concerning the continuation of work of the Organisation, and normally relate to the mandate of a committee or sub-committee, or to procedural, budgetary and administrative issues, rather than substantive commitments. In addition, Declarations form part of the body of OECD legal instruments on which all accession candidate countries take a position and are open for adherence by non-Members.

¹⁶ [Chemical legislation | Compare your country](#)

¹⁷ [Global Inventory of Pollutant Releases - OECD](#)

¹⁸ The participating organisations of the IOMC include: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

Box 1. Legal nature and benefits of Declarations

Declarations and other substantive outcome documents are OECD legal instruments adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a Ministerial, high level or other meetings within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character. The last examples of Declarations adopted during an MCM are:

- Declaration on Public Sector Innovation [[OECD/LEGAL/0450](#)];
- Declaration on Automatic Exchange of Information in Tax Matters [[OECD/LEGAL/0404](#)];
- Declaration on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting [[OECD/LEGAL/0399](#)].

Since the establishment of the OECD, 45 Declarations and other substantive outcome documents have been adopted within the framework of the Organisation, of which 37 are still in force to date. They constitute an important part of the set of OECD legal instruments and the means of expressing the high-level political commitment of the Adherents. While there are no fixed rules in terms of the structure, Declarations generally contain a preamble setting out the circumstances of the Declaration, including the list of Adherents; and high-level policy principles/political commitments with related calls for the OECD to support the Adherents' commitments.

As a Declaration is not an Act of the OECD, it is neither adopted nor endorsed by the OECD Council. The authors of a Declaration are the individual governments acting together and not the Organisation.

Scope of the draft Declaration

20. The proposed draft Declaration, as set out in Annex A, includes a preamble that recalls the 2020 goal for sound management of chemicals and waste articulated at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, and inclusion of that goal in the adoption of SAICM by the First International Conference on Chemicals Management, and in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It recognises that this goal was not met. The preamble also recognises the role of sound management of chemicals and waste in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and the Sustainable Development Goals. It also notes the 2022 UN resolution of a healthy environment as a human right. It recognises the need for increased international co-operation and coordination, including through and between international organisations, to achieve the sound management of chemicals. Finally, the draft preamble acknowledges the adoption of the GFC and the call to international organisations to support the implementation of this newly adopted framework, as stated in the Bonn Declaration.

21. Against this background, the core part of the draft Declaration reaffirms governments' commitments to improve the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle and outlines a shared position on how to support implementation of the GFC. This could include reaffirming the need for all countries to implement robust and comprehensive national chemical management systems, to collaboratively improve the knowledge and information base for chemicals and the need to strengthen international co-operation, coordination and collaboration across countries. It could also encourage industry stakeholders to ensure sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle. The draft Declaration reiterates support for the OECD's role in facilitating efforts towards sound management of chemicals and waste and supporting the implementation of national chemical management frameworks. Therefore the draft Declaration calls on the OECD,

through the CBC, to continue its on-going work under the Chemicals Programme, with the aim of contributing to meeting the goals of the GFC; to serve as a forum for collaboration on chemical safety policy, including on GFC objectives regarding issues of concern, safer alternatives and sustainable solutions; to act as a custodian of certain indicators; and to support efforts to mainstream chemicals management into ~~other environmental issues and concerns~~ all relevant sector policies. It also calls on the OECD to pursue its efforts to collaborate with other international organisations in the context of the Inter-Organisation programme for the sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) to support the implementation of the GFC.

1. Process for developing the draft Declaration

22. A **first** version of the draft is submitted to the CBC for comments by 12 January 2024 [[ENV/CBC\(2023\)20](#)]. A **revised** version will then be submitted to the Committee for finalisation at its meeting in February 2024 in view of its transmission for adoption at the 2024 MCM.

23. OECD Members, the European Union and interested non-Members will be invited to adhere to the draft Declaration at the 2024 MCM.¹⁹ Their adherence will signal their political commitment to act in conformity with the elements of the draft Declaration.

24. Following its adoption, additional interested non-Members will be able to express their interest in adhering to it. Once adopted, the Declaration will be included in the [Online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments](#).

¹⁹ As a Declaration is not an Act of the OECD, it is neither adopted nor endorsed by the OECD Council. The authors of a Declaration are the individual governments acting together and not the Organisation.

Annex A. Draft Declaration on Supporting the Achievement of the Goals of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste

WE, THE MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF [all OECD Members, the European Union and interested non-Members];

HAVING REGARD to the goals articulated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in paragraph 23 of the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, to achieve, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals in ways that lead to the minimisation of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;

HAVING REGARD to the 2006 Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) adopted at the at the First International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1), and its objectives contained in the Dubai Declaration [and the Overarching Policy Strategy](#) on International Chemicals Management;

RECALLING the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda target 12.4 to "By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water, and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment";

RECOGNISING that the 2020 objective for sound management of chemicals and waste was not achieved;

HAVING REGARD to the Resolution of the Council on Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) which was adopted by Council on 28 March 2008 [\[C\(2008\)32\]](#) and welcomed at the Environment Ministerial meeting on the 28-29 April 2008 at the OECD Headquarters;

HAVING REGARD to the standards and tools developed by the OECD related to the management of the risks associated with chemicals and pesticides; as well as its role as a forum for sharing information, knowledge and experience on these issues;

CONSIDERING the planetary and interrelated environmental crises of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss and the need to address them in a comprehensive and integrated manner;

RECOGNISING the critical role of sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle in addressing these planetary crises, including through its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on 25 September 2015 [\[A/RES/70/1\]](#) and to the achievement of the climate objectives of the Paris Agreement and the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

RECOGNISING the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/300 of 28 July 2022 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and its importance for the promotion of human well-being and the full enjoyment of all human rights;

RECOGNISING that pollution from chemicals transcends national and regional boundaries;

MINDFUL that the global value chain is putting new strains on the efficiency of national approaches for the sound management of chemicals and that concerted action is needed to address these strains and ensure

that new chemicals management systems do not lead to duplicative testing and assessments or to new non-tariff trade barriers;

RECOGNISING the need for increased co-operation and coordinated efforts at an international level, including through and between international organisations to achieve the sound management of chemicals and the pivotal role of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) in this regard;

CONSIDERING the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals (GFC) Waste and the Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste at the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in Bonn on 25-29 September 2023; and the call to international organisations to support the implementation of the GFC as appropriate;

RECOGNISING the GFC vision of a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste for a safe, healthy and sustainable future and its strategic objectives;

WE ARE COMMITTED to the improvement of the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life-cycle in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the GFC;

WE REAFFIRM the need for all countries to implement robust and comprehensive national chemical management systems and to take national actions to achieve this collective goal;

WE ALSO REAFFIRM the need to strengthen international co-operation, coordination and collaboration across countries as well as international organisations for the successful global management of chemicals, including through exchange of information and experience;

WE ALSO REAFFIRM the need to collaboratively improve the knowledge and information base for chemicals to enable informed decision-making and action;

WE ENCOURAGE industry stakeholders across global value chains to ensure sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle;

WE REITERATE our support to the role of the OECD in facilitating efforts towards the sound management of chemicals and waste, including by supporting the development and enhancement of national frameworks for chemicals management;

WE CALL on the OECD, through its Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee, in consultation with other relevant OECD policy communities, to:

- continue its on-going work in the context of the Chemicals Programme, in view of contributing to meeting the goals of the GFC, including developing, supporting implementation and updating OECD standards and tools, in particular in the area of risk assessment and management of chemicals, and ensure outputs are as accessible, relevant and useful as possible for all relevant stakeholders;
- incorporate further action into the programme of work and budget to maximise its contribution to the achievement of the strategic objectives and targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals, and thereby enabling options for tailor-made and on-site capacity building in developing countries, in particular;
- serve as a forum for collaboration on chemical safety policy, in particular considering the GFC objective of addressing issues of concern;

Met opmerkingen [MW1]: explicitly requested by para. 1 resolution ICCM V/6

- intensify supporting the uptake of safer alternatives and innovative and sustainable solutions considering the GFC Strategic Objective D and its targets, including through the exchange of information and experience and through capacity building;
- serve as a forum for collaboration on chemical safety policy, in particular considering the GFC objectives of addressing issues of concern and supporting the uptake of safer alternatives and innovative and sustainable solutions including through the exchange of information and experience;
- act as a custodian of certain indicators in relation to chemicals management and support efforts in view of mainstream chemicals management into discussions of other environmental issues and concerns;
- pursue its efforts to collaborate with other international organisations in the context of the Inter-Organisation programme for the sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) to support the implementation of the GFC.