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**Ninth meeting of the Bureau of the
Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste**
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Cooperation between the Special Programme and Global Framework on Chemicals secretariats

Bureau Action: For information

Issue: Following UNEP's 2024–2025 functional review and alignment with the UN80 initiative, the Special Programme secretariat has been integrated with the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat within a new unit. While this enhanced cooperation is designed to improve efficiency, service delivery and resource optimization, it is important to clarify that the respective mandates, governance structures and Trust Funds of the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals remain distinct and unaffected.

Purpose: This paper informs the Bureau about the enhanced cooperation between the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariats, outlines what this means in practice, and highlights the anticipated benefits in terms of coordination, efficiency, effectiveness and fiduciary compliance.

Background

1. As part of a functional review undertaken by UNEP in 2024-2025, and in clear alignment with the UN80 initiative launched in March 2025, UNEP is transforming how it operates by identifying efficiencies and reviewing how mandates are implemented, resulting in some structural staff changes.
2. As part of this process, the Special Programme secretariat now benefits from integration with the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat in a new Unit. This change allows for a collaborative operational approach that supports the distinct mandates of the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals.
3. A decision for close collaboration has been taken based on the mandates given to the UNEP Executive Director, who is tasked with providing secretariat services to both the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals. It is important to highlight that:

- a. The close co-operation does not affect the mandates of the Special Programme and the broader Global Framework on Chemicals.
 - b. The mandates and structures of the governing bodies, namely the Executive Boards of the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) Fund and the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals are also unchanged.
 - c. The separate Trust Funds underpinning the Special Programme, the GFC Fund and the Global Framework on Chemicals itself are similarly unaffected and there is no change to the respective legal and fiduciary obligations nor any merger between the two funding streams.
4. By optimizing the use of resources and drawing on existing expertise, this approach provides the necessary capacity and skillset to manage the secretariats and will improve service delivery and reduce duplication.¹

What this means in practice

5. UNEP administers the respective Trust Funds for the Global Framework on Chemicals, the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) Fund and the Special Programme (SP) through hosting the accompanying secretariat services.
6. The secretariat functions for the Special Programme and Global Framework on Chemicals include:
 - a. the management of the respective Trust Funds and servicing of the Executive Boards;
 - b. the management of the application funding rounds;
 - c. negotiation of project agreements and monitoring of the implementation of country projects;
 - d. supporting actions including resource mobilization and communications;
 - e. capacity building for the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste; and
 - f. servicing of relevant governance meetings.
7. Through this enhanced cooperation, the following core functions are being streamlined:
 - a. **Technical assistance and capacity building:** funding rounds and country project management, from preparation of calls for proposals and reviews of applications under the respective funding stream, to negotiation of legal agreements and oversight of project implementation. This also allows access to information on possible duplications or synergies and insights into performance of implementing partners.
 - b. **Meetings services:** organization of meetings of the respective governing bodies (including logistics, preparation of meeting documents, technical set-up for remote/hybrid meetings, facilitation of discussions and follow up).
 - c. **Monitoring and evaluation:** development of indicators, reviewing outcomes of country projects and programmes to assess their impact and effectiveness, including towards achieving the objectives of the chemicals and waste cluster.
 - d. **Resource mobilization:** donor and contributor research, outreach and negotiation through a coordinated approach for the implementation of the respective mandates, while avoiding competition for limited resources.

¹ UNEA resolution 6/9, requested the Executive Director of UNEP to ensure coordination between the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, as well as the Specific International Programme under the Minamata Convention, within the scope of their respective mandates.

- e. **Communications and outreach:** sharing of communication resources, joint development of communication products and management of communication and outreach campaigns to enhance clarity and relevance and improve client orientation.
8. While the alignment of functions may require staff to be funded from different Trust Funds to optimize expertise, the cooperation respects UNEP's fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the contributions to the two separate Trust Funds are expended for their intended purposes, with due regard to the respective donors' requirements. Budget monitoring and financial reporting systems are in place to ensure compliance with donor requirements.

Benefits

9. Through implementing this delivery model, there will be:
- enhanced coordination and complementarity;
 - greater specialization and effectiveness of activities such as communication and resource mobilization;
 - improved strategic planning to meet recipient countries' needs in a sustainable and coherent manner;
 - strengthened flexibility and sustainability;
 - enhanced quality by building on existing experience and expertise; and
 - cost efficiency.
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