



**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on
Chemicals, Waste and Pollution**
First session
Geneva, 2–6 February 2026
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Report on activities of the interim secretariat

Report on activities of the interim secretariat

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was established at the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, held on 20 June 2025 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The intergovernmental meeting adopted decision IM/3 on arrangements for the interim period, in which it requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide the interim secretariat to support the operation of the Panel.
2. The present document contains a summary of the activities conducted by the secretariat¹ in the period between the establishment of the Panel and November 2025 in preparation for the first session of the Plenary and with respect to stakeholder engagement.
3. The Plenary may wish to take note of the activities outlined in the present document.

II. Preparations for the first session of the Plenary

4. In preparation for the first session of the Plenary, the secretariat has transmitted the following communications:
 - (a) **Invitation for expressions of intent to become a member of the Panel.** Paragraph 4 of the foundational document of the Panel, which is set out in the annex to decision IM/1 of the intergovernmental meeting, specifies that membership of the Plenary is open to States Members of the United Nations and United Nations non-member observer States having expressed their intent to be a member of the Panel. Member States and non-member observer States of the United Nations that were present at the intergovernmental meeting are considered founding members of the Panel unless they have indicated otherwise. The Executive Director of UNEP, in her letter dated 2 October 2025, invited Member States and non-member observer States of the United Nations that were not present at the intergovernmental meeting but intended to become members of the Panel to send an official

* UNEP/ISP-CWP.1/1.

¹ References to “the secretariat” in the present document refer to the interim secretariat provided pursuant to decision IM/3.

communication to the secretariat expressing their intent to become a member. The list of members of the Panel can be found on the Panel website.²

(b) **Call for nominations of national focal points for the Panel by Panel members.** In her letter dated 2 October 2025, the Executive Director called on all Member States to nominate a national focal point to serve as the principal contact for all communications and be responsible for disseminating information related to the Panel's work and findings at the national level. Member States were invited to transmit their nominations through a note verbale or nomination letter submitted to the secretariat. They were encouraged to submit their nominations by the deadline of 31 October 2025, which was later extended to 20 November 2025. The list of national focal points will be posted and maintained on the Panel website.³

(c) **Deadline for offers to provide the physical location of the secretariat of the Panel.** According to paragraph 22 of the foundational document, the Panel, at its first plenary session, will secure secretariat services provided by UNEP, and the secretariat will be hosted in a single location based on proposals by members. The secretariat circulated a letter to all members of the Panel on 17 September 2025 with a deadline of 5 November 2025 for submissions of offers to host the secretariat. Document UNEP/ISP-CWP.1/INF/3 provides an overview of the offers received by the deadline.

(d) **Call for nomination of candidates for the Bureau.** Paragraphs 9–12 of the foundational document outline the membership and functions of the Bureau of the Panel. The Bureau will comprise two members from each of the five United Nations regional groups, including one Chair and nine Vice-Chairs, one of whom acts as Rapporteur. Members of the Bureau are expected to be elected by the Plenary at its first session and will be selected for their expertise relevant to the Bureau functions. A call for nominations of candidates for the Bureau was circulated to all members of the Panel on 2 October 2025 with a deadline of 7 November 2025, which was later extended to 21 November 2025. Members were requested to include the nominee's full name and affiliation, a short statement of expertise demonstrating relevance to the Bureau's functions, a brief curriculum vitae and a confirmation of availability to serve on the Bureau, including during intersessional periods. Document UNEP/ISP-CWP.1/INF/2 sets out an overview of the nominated candidates for the Bureau received by the deadline.

(e) **Invitations for the first session of the Plenary.** A letter of invitation for the first session of the Plenary was circulated to all Member States on 23 October 2025, with deadlines of 20 November 2025 for registration and 24 November 2025 for eligible Panel members to request travel support. Members were requested to send, before the start of the session, a scanned copy of the credentials of their representatives signed by an appropriate government authority, as well as other formal communications containing the names of their representatives.

(f) **Preparation of meeting documents for the first session of the Plenary.** In paragraph 4 of decision IM/3, on arrangements for the interim period, the intergovernmental meeting requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with Member States, to prepare relevant documentation for consideration at the first session of the Plenary. Pursuant to that decision, the secretariat convened an online consultation with Member States on 28 October 2025. Following the presentation by the secretariat of a suggested provisional agenda, proposals for the preparations of documentation and updates on logistics and other preparations for the first session of the Plenary, members offered their views, comments and guidance to the secretariat on their expectations, prioritization and the proposed documentation. The documents prepared by the secretariat for the first session of the Plenary are available online on the event page.⁴

III. Stakeholder engagement

5. The secretariat conducted the following stakeholder engagement activities in the period between the intergovernmental meeting and late November 2025:

(a) On 28 August 2025, at the invitation of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the secretariat delivered a briefing to that panel's Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. The briefing covered the process for establishing the Panel and an overview of the foundational document adopted by the

² <https://www.unep.org/isp-cwp/membership>.

³ <https://www.unep.org/isp-cwp/membership>.

⁴ <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/first-session-plenary-intergovernmental-science-policy-panel-chemicals-waste-and>.

intergovernmental meeting and its recommendations for consideration by the Plenary at its first session.

(b) At the invitation of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the secretariat, during the regional preparatory meetings for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, delivered briefings to Governments and other stakeholders of the Latin American and Caribbean States (online, on 3 and 4 September 2025), the Eastern European States (online, on 16 and 17 September 2025), the Asia-Pacific States (online, on 23 and 24 September 2025) and the African States (in person, on 7–9 October 2025). The briefings covered the road to the establishment of the Panel and an overview of the foundational document, next steps and opportunities for engagement.

(c) At the invitation of the organizers of the seventeenth Chemical Regulatory Annual Conference, held in Hangzhou, China, on 10 and 11 September 2025, the secretariat prepared a briefing for conference participants. Delivered by the representative of the China Office of UNEP on behalf of the secretariat, the in-person briefing covered the road to the establishment of the Panel and an overview of the foundational document, next steps and opportunities for engagement.

(d) The secretariat participated in the ninth World Congress of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) and the twelfth biennial meeting of SETAC Africa, held jointly from 29 September to 3 October 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. At the invitation of the organizers, the secretariat delivered an in-person briefing on the Panel covering the road to the establishment of the Panel, an overview of the Panel as specified in the foundational document, potential modalities for scientist engagement in the Panel's work, and possible next steps.

(e) On 16 October 2025, in collaboration with the Geneva Environment Network, the secretariat organized an online event in the lead-up to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. Titled "From Science to Action: Insights from the Minamata Convention and Emerging Priorities", the event was an exploration of how the Minamata Convention had effectively bridged the gap between science and policy. The discussion highlighted practical examples of relevance to the Panel and possible opportunities for collaboration between the Panel and the Minamata Convention. The event brought together policymakers, scientists and stakeholders to reflect on the science-policy interactions of the Minamata Convention, such as assessments and monitoring, and to consider possible priorities that the Panel could address, with a focus on issues related to metals and metalloids.

(f) On 30 October 2025, at the invitation of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty, the secretariat delivered an informal briefing to coalition members. The briefing covered the road to the establishment of the Panel and an overview of the foundational document, next steps and opportunities for scientist engagement.

(g) On 6 November 2025, the secretariat, in collaboration with the Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP, hosted an event titled "Knowledge Lab – Informing Integrated Chemicals Management: Data Needs and Experience from Mercury" on the margins of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. The event explored how data-driven approaches can support sustainable and responsible practices across the life cycle of metals and metalloids, from mining and use to end-of-life disposal, drawing on lessons learned from mercury management under the Minamata Convention, including mercury monitoring, Minamata Initial Assessments and national action plans. In its closing remarks, the secretariat called for strengthened global collaboration and the integration of environmental, health and socioeconomic data to inform evidence-based policy and investment decisions.

(h) On 19 November 2025, in collaboration with the Geneva Environment Network, the secretariat organized a webinar on the Panel. The webinar provided an introduction to the Panel as specified in the foundational document, a detailed presentation on the draft rules of procedure and an overview of next steps in the preparations for the first session of the Plenary.

6. The secretariat will conduct additional stakeholder engagement activities in the weeks leading up to the first session of the Plenary, as follows:

(a) On 11 December 2025, the secretariat will hold an in-person event titled "Bridging Science and Policy: Strengthening Resilience to Tackle the Environmental Crises" on the margins of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The event will be focused on relevant examples from other science-policy interfaces and exploration of the potential for collaboration and coordination with relevant multilateral environmental agreements. It will mark the establishment of the Panel in 2025 and allow Governments and stakeholders to share their expectations for the new panel, identify synergies and highlight priorities.

(b) On 16 December 2025, in collaboration with the Geneva Environment Network, the secretariat will host a webinar on engaging scientists and experts in strengthening the science-policy interface on chemicals, waste and pollution. Panellists will include representatives of academia, science advisors and representatives of the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

(c) On 14 January 2026, in collaboration with the Geneva Environment Network, the secretariat will host a webinar providing a briefing on preparations for the first session of the Plenary.

ADVANCE