

Written Submission on the Foundational Documents, Youth Priorities, and Engagement Proposals for the SPP on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution Prevention

The [Children and Youth Major Group \(CYMG\)](#) to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing process toward the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel (SPP) on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution Prevention. As a formal stakeholder constituency recognized as part of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Mechanism, CYMG represents a broad and diverse network of youth-led organizations, young scientists, and early career professionals working to address environmental challenges across local, regional, and global levels. Our participation in this process is guided by the belief that intergenerational equity, inclusive governance, and scientific integrity must be core pillars of the new Panel. As Children and Youth, we trust that this panel will be important for the future of the environment, and we envision this Panel to raise the ambition, scale up solutions, and be designed to overcome current and future challenges from chemical, waste, and pollution.

This submission reflects the collective perspectives of young people actively engaged in environmental governance and knowledge production. It is grounded in a broad and inclusive consultative process led by CYMG, including preparatory meetings and youth consultations convened ahead of the previous OEWG sessions. Most recently, this included a series of virtual roundtable consultations held in May 2025, engaging over 200 youth and early career professionals. We appreciate the participatory spirit that has characterized the OEWG sessions to date and emphasize the importance of maintaining and enhancing this spirit as the Panel's structure and work modalities are finalized.

This submission is structured as follows:

- **Part I: CYMG's Top 10 Priorities**, highlighting key principles and considerations from youth perspectives to guide the Panel's establishment and long-term functioning.
- **Part II: General Comments and Textual Proposals** offering reflections on the foundational documents.
- **Part III: Proposals for Meaningful Engagement**, outlining recommendations to institutionalize youth participation and ensure sustained, inclusive involvement of early career professionals in the Panel's work programme.

In recognition of the urgent need to strengthen global action on the adverse impacts of hazardous chemicals, waste mismanagement, and pollution, we propose the name **Intergovernmental Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (IPCWP)** for the newly established science-policy body. This proposed name reflects the Panel's core mandate to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution, aligning with UNEA resolution 5/8. The name maintains consistency with existing science-policy interfaces, notably IPCC and IPBES, while clearly communicating the Panel's comprehensive thematic focus. Establishing a clear, purposeful identity for the Panel is essential to ensure its visibility and long-term impact.

Part I: CYMG's Top 10 Priorities for the SPP

Derived from CYMG's intersessional work ahead of OEWG sessions, these priorities reflect a collective youth effort to shape the Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution, emphasizing inclusivity, innovation, meaningful participation, and adaptability in addressing the global environmental challenges.

1. **Prioritize Intergenerational Equity:** Integrate intergenerational equity into the existing operating principles, ensuring that the Panel's structure and work incorporate intergenerational perspectives and foster active engagement of children and youth, particularly those in vulnerable situations, across all levels of decision-making. As Pact for the Future emphasizes, intergenerational equity is key in ensuring that present generations act with responsibility towards safeguarding the needs and interests of future generations.
2. **Inclusive Plenary Functions to Ensure Multistakeholder Collaboration:** Ensure that the plenary's functions reflect inclusivity and broad representation of expertise and perspectives by recognizing Major Groups and other Stakeholders, as referenced in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Their inclusion will promote multistakeholder collaboration, strengthen partnerships and coordination, enhance knowledge sharing and transparency, and foster innovation and collective action.
3. **Establish a Youth Expert Advisory Group:** Institutionalize the Youth Expert Advisory Group as a subcommittee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee to integrate the voices of youth experts and early career professionals in the panel's work programme, ensuring their perspectives help shape research priorities, outreach strategies, and policy recommendations. The institutionalized inclusion of youth experts and professionals will facilitate engagement and outreach with youth communities and ensure inclusive, forward-looking, and sustainable outcomes. This group should have equal representation across regions and genders, specifically focusing on inclusion from communities in vulnerable situations.
4. **Embed Human Rights-Based Approach:** Adopt a human rights-based approach to the management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution by recognizing, respecting, and integrating the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. This approach should also address the intersectional vulnerabilities that affected communities face, particularly in relation to health risks, conflict zones, and socioeconomic disparities, and ensure the inclusion, protection, and empowerment of informal sector workers who are disproportionately exposed yet often excluded from formal decision-making and safeguards.
5. **Flexible and Iterative Approach:** Adopt a flexible and iterative approach that enables continuous learning, evidence-based adjustments, and real-time responsiveness to emerging findings, technological innovations, and evolving social dynamics, including information consumption trends. This approach is essential to ensure that the governance of chemicals, waste, and pollution is adaptive, future-proof, and resilient in the face of rapidly shifting global challenges.



6. **Complementarity:** Support specific principles, including transparency, accountability, and the precautionary approach (as outlined in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration), as mutually reinforcing pillars of the science-policy interface. These principles should enable a proactive, forward-looking approach to protect human and environmental health, particularly in the face of scientific uncertainty.
7. **Embed strong safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest:** Ensure that scientific assessments, policy recommendations, and implementation processes are not guided by actors who may benefit from the unsound management of chemicals, waste, and pollution or from the poor implementation of sustainable policies. Upholding the integrity, objectivity, and independence of the Panel is essential to its effectiveness and maintaining public trust.
8. **Capacity Building:** Ensure long-term, inclusive capacity development that empowers diverse stakeholders to meaningfully engage with the Panel's work. Grounded in the principles of access to information and public participation (e.g., Rio Principle 10, Escazú Agreement, Aarhus Convention), capacity-building efforts should be holistic, incorporate intergenerational learning, and be responsive to regional needs, linguistic diversity, and bottom-up knowledge systems.
9. **Adaptive Outreach and Awareness Raising:** Establish a flexible outreach mechanism that leverages ethical and sustainable technological advancements and integrates best practices from platforms like GEO, IPBES, and IPCC. This mechanism should generate accessible, multilingual, and multimodal outputs tailored to the stakeholders' needs, enable effective dissemination to reach broader audiences, and incorporate continuous feedback to strengthen knowledge-sharing. The Panel should uphold synergy and policy coherence with various multilateral environmental agreements and instruments in its exercise of functions due to the intertwined nature of the issue and to avoid duplication.
10. **Focus on Communities in Vulnerable Situations:** Prioritize solutions and capacity-building efforts for communities in vulnerable situations, taking into account intersecting factors such as poverty, geography, gender, age, and political marginalization. These efforts should be supported by financial and technical assistance, grounded in principles of distributional justice, and include ongoing education, monitoring, and evaluation to assess impact, promote accountability, and guide adaptive policy responses that reflect the needs and active participation of affected communities.



Part II: Foundational Documents: General Comments and Textual Proposals

1) UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/6 - Foundational document and related draft decision for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel

We acknowledge the efforts reflected in the current draft to structure the future Panel in an inclusive and interdisciplinary manner. The recognition of principles such as gender balance, regional diversity, Indigenous knowledge, and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is a positive step toward shaping an equitable and effective Panel.

At the same time, we observe that intergenerational equity, while mentioned, is not yet consistently mainstreamed throughout the document. The draft would benefit from more explicit language on youth engagement mechanisms and clearer operational commitments to inclusive participation by civil society, particularly groups that are underrepresented and disproportionately impacted, including youth, Indigenous Peoples, and informal workers.

Lastly, while the draft outlines a comprehensive institutional structure (including the plenary, expert committee, and bureau), we note the absence of specific provisions ensuring the meaningful participation of civil society beyond generic observer roles. Youth and civil society engagement should be positioned as integral to the success, credibility, and long-term legitimacy of the Panel. To strengthen the foundational document and ensure that the Panel is future-oriented and inclusive, we recommend the following textual insertions and amendments:

Foundational Document Texts	Proposals
1. On the Operating Principles and Approaches (Section B) para 2, subpara j: "[(j) Recognising the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to science, and intergenerational equity and the importance of informed participation.]"	(j) Recognising the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; (k) Upholding intergenerational equity to reflect the interests of present and future generations; (l) Ensuring inclusive and informed participatory process, including equitable access to science and knowledge; Following the approach used for previously agreed principles, this restructuring ensures that each element (Environmental Rights, Intergenerational Equity, Access to Science, and Informed Participation) is presented as a distinct guiding principle. This enhances clarity, reflects their equal importance, and supports more effective and inclusive implementation by the Panel.
2. On Participation (Section C, para 6) [...] participation as observers to any [...] governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, Indigenous Peoples[,] [or other	Participation as observers shall include non-governmental stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, youth, other disproportionately impacted populations, and local communities.



disproportionately impacted populations and other relevant stakeholders,] and local communities [...]	
3. On the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee (Section III, para 15): 15. Members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee are nominated by regions and elected by [the Governing Body during a] Plenary, [taking into account the need to ensure][ensuring] the committee is interdisciplinary, [by] ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; has inclusive participation, including by indigenous peoples; and has geographical, regional and gender balance	15. Members of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee are nominated by regions and elected by [the Governing Body during a] Plenary, [taking into account the need to ensure][ensuring] the committee is interdisciplinary, [by] ensuring contributions from experts with a broad range of disciplinary expertise; has inclusive participation, including by indigenous peoples, youth, other disproportionately impacted populations, and local communities; and has geographical, regional and gender balance
4. On Strategic Partnerships (Section VI, para 30) 30. The [Governing Body of the Panel][Panel][Plenary] [may decide to][shall] pursue formal strategic partnerships with United Nations entities, multilateral agreements[, regional entities, funding agencies] and other [selected][relevant] stakeholders that are active and qualified in the topics covered by the Panel. [Formal strategic partnerships [support][can be a means of] [promoting synergies [and avoiding overlap] towards] [achieving the operating principle[s] [of the Panel] [that includes] "avoiding overlap and duplication of work, and promoting coordination and cooperation"] [while delivering on any of the Panel's functions].]	Adding: Strategic partnerships shall include youth-led networks, women's organizations, Indigenous Peoples groups, local communities, and science-policy alliances, with a focus on expanding access to knowledge, innovation, and science-policy dialogues.

2) UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/7 - Recommendations for consideration by the governing body of the science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution at its first session and related draft decision for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting

We welcome the structured and comprehensive approach presented in the current draft procedural recommendations for the functioning of the SPP. We acknowledge the efforts to promote scientific rigor, transparency, and inclusiveness across various components of the Panel's envisioned work. At the same time, we would like to share the following preliminary comments and suggestions to strengthen the draft text, particularly in relation to institutional inclusivity and mainstreaming of intergenerational equity.

Early career professionals and youth participation have not yet been explicitly addressed in the draft rules of procedure. We understand that a formal stakeholder engagement mechanism will be developed and adopted by the Panel's governing body during its first plenary sessions. However, we recommend that the current draft include indicative language



that reflects the importance of establishing inclusive and participatory modalities for stakeholder engagement. This would provide early guidance and commitment toward meaningful involvement of non-governmental actors, including youth.

Furthermore, we emphasize that the development of the stakeholder engagement mechanism should be undertaken through a consultative process. Provisions on expert selection and the conflict-of-interest policy could be enhanced by introducing clearer pathways for stakeholder input, including the participation of young scientists and early-career professionals in shaping the Panel's deliverables. Moreover, we call for strengthened facilitation and support for stakeholders engaging with the Panel's works and activities.

We note the absence of references to youth-specific fellowships or knowledge-sharing programmes to support capacity building and sustained early-career engagement. These are crucial for ensuring continuity, diversity, and intergenerational knowledge exchange within the Panel's scientific processes. Proposed Textual Insertions:

Foundational Document Text	Proposals
1. Annex 1, Rule 2 (Observer Definition): "Observer" means any State not a member of the Panel, any regional economic integration organization, any secretariat of a multilateral environmental agreement, or any other body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, including any organization or representative of Indigenous Peoples or of local communities, that has expertise in matters covered by the Panel and has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at sessions of the governing body of the Panel, subject to the provisions set out in the rules of procedure;	"Observer" means any State not a member of the Panel, any regional economic integration organization, any secretariat of a multilateral environmental agreement, or any other body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, including any organization or representative of Indigenous Peoples, Youth or of local communities, that has expertise in matters covered by the Panel and has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at sessions of the governing body of the Panel, subject to the provisions set out in the rules of procedure;
2. Annex 2, Paragraph 4 [Submissions by relevant stakeholders, such as international and regional scientific organizations, trust funds, governmental and non-governmental organizations, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector entities and foundations, whether made individually or jointly, will also be encouraged and taken into account, as appropriate.]	Submissions by relevant stakeholders, such as international and regional scientific organizations, trust funds, governmental and non-governmental organizations, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, Youth, private sector entities and foundations, whether made individually or jointly, will also be encouraged and taken into account, as appropriate.]
3. Annex 3, Section B on Deliverables	Adding:



	Summaries for youth: A “summary for youth” provides a youth-relevant summary of the key findings of a [deliverable] [report] with the aim of increasing accessibility of the [deliverable] [report] to a wider youth audience, including students and grassroots activists. It is typically prepared as a companion to an assessment or a synthesis report.
4. Annex 3, Section B on Deliverables (para 4f bis): [(f) bis Written or audio-visual materials produced either as a complement to another deliverable or as a deliverable itself. Training materials should be focused on a specific audience to achieve specific learning objectives. They are distinguished from information and communication materials (h) intended to create public awareness.]	[(f) bis Written or audio-visual materials produced either as a complement to another deliverable or as a deliverable itself, including materials designed to enhance accessibility and intergenerational learning. Training materials should be focused on a specific audience to achieve specific learning objectives. They are distinguished from information and communication materials (h) intended to create public awareness.]
5. Annex 3, Procedures for Deliverables, Section on Expert Nomination (para 19) 19. The secretariat prepares a call for expert nominations on the basis of the work programme agreed by the governing body and the scoping report if one was prepared.	19. The secretariat prepares a call for expert nominations on the basis of the work programme agreed by the governing body and the scoping report if one was prepared. The expert nomination process should include dedicated outreach mechanisms to encourage applications from underrepresented groups, including youth, Indigenous Peoples, and experts from developing countries
6. Annex I to the Procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables. Roles and responsibilities for the preparation of assessments	In addition to specified roles, the Panel shall include a dedicated role for early-career professionals and researchers Fellows: Fellows support the development of deliverables by providing technical, organizational, and integrative assistance to author teams while simultaneously receiving capacity-building opportunities. Fellows also contribute to literature reviews, data management, coordination of inputs, and support communication between disciplines and stakeholder groups.

The inclusion of Fellows draws from successful models in other intergovernmental science-policy processes, including the IPCC, which has embedded Chapter Scientists into author teams to assist in drafting, coordinating, and contributing to different sections of the assessment reports. IPBES operates a Fellowship Programme that has engaged several early-career researchers through direct engagement in assessments. The GEO process incorporates early-career fellows into its author teams.



These models have consistently demonstrated that engaging early-career professionals not only builds future capacity but also:

- Infuses assessments with fresh interdisciplinary perspectives, especially from the social sciences, innovation, and technology domains.
- Bridges generational knowledge gaps and creates long-term ownership and engagement in science-policy work.
- Improves inclusivity and regional representation.
- Strengthens the future credibility and sustainability of the Panel by building a pipeline of trained professionals ready to contribute to future assessment cycles.

Relevant additional paragraph to the respective Procedural Section (Annex III, para 18–20):
The secretariat, in collaboration with the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, shall establish and issue regular calls for nominations of Fellows, ensuring regional and disciplinary balance, and shall include at least one Fellow per chapter or major deliverable.

3) UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/8 - Proposal on interim arrangements to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel

We welcome the proposed interim arrangements and commend the pathway to ensure a smooth transition from the establishment of the Panel to its first plenary session. We underscore the importance of clearly defining the mandate of the interim secretariat to ensure effective technical and procedural preparation for the first meeting of the governing body. We believe that the first plenary of the governing body represents a critical milestone in shaping an inclusive, effective, and representative science-policy panel. In this regard, we strongly recommend that the interim secretariat not only prepare the required documentation and logistical arrangements but also maintain the participatory spirit that has guided the progress of the OEWG thus far.

Specifically, we encourage the continuation of inclusive engagement with civil society and major groups, including youth, in the preparatory process leading to the first plenary. We also urge that the interim period be used to build momentum around the Panel's future work, including through outreach and awareness-raising.

Part III: Proposals for Meaningful Youth Engagement with the SPP

The following recommendations and proposals reflect the principles of intergenerational equity, inclusivity, and scientific integrity:

1. Youth Expert Advisory Group:

Establish a [Youth Expert Advisory Group](#) as a sub-committee under the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee (IEC) to provide structured and consistent input from youth scientists and policy advocates into the Panel's work.

Objectives:

- Ensuring systematic and ongoing youth engagement beyond ad hoc consultations.
- Creating a bridge between grassroots knowledge, academic youth research, and SPP deliverables.
- Promoting co-creation, capacity-building, and knowledge exchange with senior experts.
- Aligns with existing successful models of Advisory Groups and Youth Programmes in different Panels and multilateral environmental agreements.

2. Fellowship Programme:

Launch a Youth Fellowship Programme to embed early career professionals in the technical and procedural processes of the SPP, including support roles to lead authors and committees.

Objectives:

- Supporting intergenerational learning and mentorship within SPP structures.
- Providing early career professionals with hands-on experience in science-policy interfaces.
- Enhancing the capacity of youth from all regions to contribute substantively to assessments.
- Addressing barriers to entry often faced by young people in global processes.

3. PhD Scholarship Programme:

Establish an SPP PhD Scholarship Fund to support young researchers, especially from developing countries, to pursue doctoral studies aligned with the thematic focus of the Panel.

Objectives:

- Addressing structural inequalities in access to higher education and scientific research.
- Encouraging new knowledge generation directly relevant to SPP priorities.
- Building a pipeline of diverse expertise to feed into future assessments and expert groups.
- Supporting national and regional capacity-building objectives.



4. SPP Youth Network:

Create an SPP Youth Network, an open, recognized stakeholder platform that allows youth organizations, academic groups, and individual youth experts to submit collective inputs and engage across the Panel's processes.

Objectives:

- Facilitating coordination, peer learning, and collective consultation among youth constituencies.
- Enabling structured participation in submission processes, work programme consultations, and regional dialogues.
- Supporting the inclusion of youth from rural areas, marginalized communities, and non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Serving as a platform to support translation, accessibility, and outreach efforts.

5. Youth-Friendly Deliverables and Outreach:

Require the development of Youth Summaries and outreach materials for each major deliverable, accompanied by outreach materials and capacity-building training.

Objectives:

- Making complex scientific outputs accessible to a wider youth audience, including students and grassroots activists.
- Enhancing the uptake, application, and dissemination of scientific findings.
- Contributing to awareness-raising, education, and youth-led action at the community level.
- Helping addresses language and digital accessibility barriers.

Find out more about CYMG's engagement with the SPP OEWG:

<https://www.cymgenvironment.net/youth-oewg-spp>

Read the policy brief on the best practices of young engagement in existing science-policy interfaces:

https://www.cymgenvironment.net/_files/ugd/b938c6_62f1298263dd4bf5941a2566aa97c911.pdf

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the following thematic facilitators:

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