



Dear Secretariat of the ad hoc open-ended working group
Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals, waste and to prevent pollution
United Nations Environment Programme,

On behalf of the Women's Major Group, we are pleased to submit our consolidated comments on the following working documents of OEWG 3.2:

- **UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/6:** Foundational document and related draft decision for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel;
- **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;
- **UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/8:** Proposal on interim arrangements to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and contribute our perspective. This submission is informed by the expertise and lived experiences of a diverse group of women, including scientists, technical experts, grassroots leaders, and feminist organizations engaged in environmental justice, human rights, and sustainable development. The comments are structured below, following the order of the documents and relevant paragraphs.

Our submission emphasizes the importance of gender equality, inclusivity, and transparency across all aspects of the Panel's governance, operations, and deliverables.



UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG. 3.6. Foundational document and related draft decision for consideration by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel

Comments on the text

I.Introduction

6. In finalizing the draft decision and its annex, the ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/8 and build on the agreements reached in its previous sessions.

Our comment: In our view, the working group must ensure the draft decision reflects not only the technical and procedural priorities but also the urgency of establishing an inclusive, transparent, and science-driven panel that effectively addresses global challenges related to chemicals, waste, and pollution. This would help align the foundational work with the broader objectives of sustainability, equity, and evidence-based policymaking.

II.[Draft decision [--] of the intergovernmental meeting to establish the panel¹

Establishment of the [insert full name of panel]

Reaffirming that the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution are crucial for the protection of [the environment and] human health [and the environment],

Our comments: Remove: The environment and (this should proceed human health). Keep: and the environment (human health should precede).

Convinced that a science-policy panel could support countries in their efforts to take action, including to implement multilateral environmental agreements [and other relevant international instruments]; promote the sound management of chemicals and waste and address pollution by providing policy-relevant scientific advice on issues; and further support relevant multilateral agreements, other

¹ The draft decision and its annex are presented without formal editing.



international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders in their work,]

Our comments: Keep: and other relevant international instruments (this will help in complementing other relevant processes for chemical and waste in related conventions).

Annex I to draft decision [--]

Proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel: outcome of the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

A.Scope, objective and functions of the panel

(a)Undertaking “horizon scanning” to identify issues of relevance to policymakers and, where possible, proposing evidence-based options to address them;

Our comets: Horizon scanning is about issues that are most probably new and unknown, saying that only the "evidence-based" option will be presented is limiting. It should be just "present options to address them."

(b)Conducting assessments of current issues and identifying potential evidence-based options to address, where possible, those issues, in particular those relevant to developing countries;

Our suggested text: Conducting **participatory** assessments of current issues and identifying potential evidence-based options to address, where possible, those issues, in particular those relevant to developing countries;

(d) Facilitating information-sharing with countries, in particular developing countries seeking relevant scientific information;

Our comments: There is a significant gap in the availability of scientific information due to varying access to research data. Most research conducted in developed countries requires payment for access, while research from developing countries is often available for free. This creates inequality in the sharing of high-level scientific information, which could be valuable to developing nations. Add text: The text should therefore reflect this type of access to information.



B. Operating principles and approaches of the panel

(a) [Being scientifically independent, and]ensuring credibility and legitimacy including through peer review of its work,

Our suggested text: (a) [Being scientifically independent, and]ensuring credibility and legitimacy ,including through peer review of its work, including also UNEP's MG in the review.

Our comments:

- Maintaining scientific independence is essential as it reflects ethical scientific practice and ensures complete transparency throughout the process.
- It should be "Be free of conflict of interest" rather than scientifically independent

[(c) Recognizing the technical knowledge and experience of workers[, including informal workers], involved in the management of chemicals and waste, and promoting a safe and healthy work environment.]

Our comments: Change text: Technical knowledge recognition does not lead to its inclusion in the process; it simply acknowledges what is known.

[(f) Producing deliverables that are policy relevant without being policy prescriptive, and, scientifically robust, unbiased and accessible and if appropriate, [prevention focussed] [while also [highlighting] [addressing] [negative socioeconomic][relevant] aspects of policies].]

Our comments: Keep Text: Focusing on prevention will ensure that processes work within the framework of protecting human health. Addressing these issues will guarantee that they are tackled on a practical level rather than just in theory.

[(k) Addressing [the prevention of] all forms of [existing and legacy] pollution[, including pollution] related to chemicals and waste and pollution released into the air, water [(including oceans)] and soil.]

Our comments: Keep text: [existing and legacy]. Ensuring the prevention and addressing of issues related to chemicals and waste should remain a priority for both existing and legacy systems.

Participation of [observers] [States not members of the Panel, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations]



7. [The [Governing Body][Plenary] is open to participation by regional economic integration organizations as observers. The European Union is allowed enhanced participation in sessions of the Plenary, including the right to speak in turn; the right of reply; the right to introduce proposals; the right to provide views; and the ability to support the implementation of the work programme of the Panel through financial support, among other means. [These rights do not grant the ability to be elected to the Bureau of the Panel].]

Our comments: Contradictory Text: The European Union is allowed to enhance participation in sessions of the plenary..... with that of bracketed text

III. Committees and subsidiary bodies

Membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

14 alt The Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be comprised of five experts from each of the 5 UN regional groups. The membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee may be modified by a further decision of the Governing Body.

Our comments: Having five experts from each UN region is insufficient for such a scientific process. It is uncommon for just one expert from each region to possess the comprehensive expertise required for the range of scientific knowledge needed. Instead, including two to three experts from each region would yield more fruitful results.

Functions of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

19. The functions of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee include:

(a) Providing advice to the Plenary and the Bureau on, and coordinating the delivery of, scientific and technical and capacity building aspects of the Panel's programme of work;

(b) Providing advice and assistance on technical and/or scientific communication matters;

(c) Developing a transparent peer review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence, inclusivity, integrity, and credibility for the Panel's deliverables following procedures and processes set out in relevant documents

(d) In consultation with the Bureau, advising on and overseeing the process for defining the scope of deliverables;



(e) Selecting experts for Panel activities as agreed in the Work Programme taking into account the need for different disciplines and forms of knowledge, regional and gender balance and effective contribution and participation by experts from developing countries;

(f) Engaging the scientific community and other knowledge holders with the work programme;

(g) Assuring scientific and technical coordination among other bodies set up under the Panel and facilitating coordination between the Panel and related processes to build upon existing efforts.

(h) Reporting to the Governing Body.

Our comments:

- Recognition and strengthening of knowledge diversity, taking into account the need for different forms of knowledge, including Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge systems.
- Emphasis on the representation of marginalised voices from women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, youth, and experts from least developed countries and small island states
- Recommendation of designating a standing expert or sub-group within the committee to assess all deliverables and processes via a gender and social equity lens aligned with UNEP's Gender Action Plan and the SDGs.
- Recommend establishing ethical protocols and safeguards when engaging with Indigenous knowledge holders, ensuring free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) while respecting community ownership of knowledge.

Other subsidiary bodies

20. The Governing Body may establish other subsidiary bodies under the Panel, in line with the rules of procedure.

Our comments:

- Proposing that all subsidiary bodies established by the Governing Body should:
 - 1) Adhere to the same principles of inclusivity, equity, and gender balance as the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.
 - 2) Integrate representatives or liaisons from civil society, including women's groups, Indigenous organizations, and youth constituencies, to ensure responsiveness to on-the-ground realities.



- 3) Be subject to transparent reporting and review mechanisms, including gender-disaggregated data on participation and leadership, and qualitative assessments of how marginalized voices influence decision-making.
- The recommendations ensure that the Panel's scientific and technical work is just, legitimate, and responsive to the meaningful inclusion of women, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized communities, which must be institutionalized and not left to discretion.

V. Financial Arrangements

24. alt [[Voluntary] Contributions to the Trust Fund are [welcomed][invited] from Governments,[using the UN voluntary indicative scale of assessments as a guideline, and are welcomed][as well as] from United Nations bodies, [the Global Environment Facility], other intergovernmental organizations [, international financial institutions and development banks] and stakeholders such as the private sector and foundations, on the understanding that such funding [the amount of contributions from private sources must not exceed the amount of contributions from public sources in any biennium]:

Our comments: If the "polluters pay" principle is included, could it lead to private funding sources surpassing taxpayer contributions? A declaration of funding sources is needed to ensure transparency without compromising the integrity of the process.

General Comments on the document:

- Strengthen Gender-Responsive Framing in Scope and Functions

The section on the panel's objective (Annex I, Section A) already acknowledges gender balance in capacity-building. I recommend integrating a broader gender-responsive approach by explicitly including gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis within participatory assessments and horizon scanning. This will help surface gender-differentiated impacts of chemical exposure and pollution.

- Visibility and Inclusion of Women in Science Communication

Under Section A, function: "Providing up-to-date and relevant information... and raising public awareness," I recommend adding a reference to ensuring gender-sensitive communication strategies and the engagement of women communicators and journalists. Women remain



underrepresented in science communication roles, yet are critical in shaping accessible and inclusive narratives.

- Commitment to Media Partnerships and Public Engagement

In Section IV (Secretariat), include media partnerships as part of the panel's communication strategy. A dedicated effort to collaborate with journalists and media organizations, particularly those focusing on environmental justice and gender equality, can increase public access to the panel's outputs and build broader societal support for sound chemicals and waste management.

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

Comments on the text:

Annex 1 to draft decision [--]

Rules of procedure for [sessions of] the governing body of the [insert full name of panel]

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)

1. In addition to subsidiary bodies established in paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document, including the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, the governing body of the Panel may establish other subsidiary bodies to realize such objectives as may be agreed on during a session of the governing body.

Suggested text:

1. In addition to subsidiary bodies established in paragraphs [--] to [--] of the foundational document, including the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee, the governing body of the Panel may establish other subsidiary bodies to realize such objectives as may be agreed on during a session of the governing body. **In doing so, the Panel should strive to ensure balanced geographical, disciplinary, and gender representation and actively promote the inclusion of women experts in leadership and technical roles within these subsidiary bodies.**

General comments:



- While Rule 13 acknowledges the importance of gender balance in the Bureau, we recommend reinforcing this principle throughout the document by requiring gender-disaggregated reporting on participation (experts, leadership, speakers) and setting measurable targets for gender equity in panel and subsidiary body compositions.
- Under Annex 3, in the procedures for the preparation of panel deliverables, we suggest including an explicit reference to integrating a gender analysis in all assessments and reports. The sound management of chemicals and waste often has differentiated impacts on women and men, particularly in occupational and domestic settings, and these should be addressed systematically.
- To strengthen public communication and transparency, we recommend including a clause encouraging the development of tailored media materials (Annex 3, “Information and communication materials”) with a focus on gender-sensitive language. The panel should engage media professionals and communicators, including women-led media, as key actors in disseminating results to diverse audiences.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/8: Proposal on interim arrangements to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting.

General Comments:

- Ensure Gender and Regional Balance in Interim Preparations

In the paragraph requesting UNEP to prepare for the first governing body session, include a recommendation that interim preparations ensure gender-balanced and regionally diverse consultations, including with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and women’s groups. Early inclusivity strengthens trust and legitimacy in the panel’s formation.

- Include Media Stakeholders in the Preparatory Phase

Suggest adding that the interim secretariat, while preparing for the first session, engages with public-interest media and environmental journalists to ensure transparent communication from the outset. The media plays a key role in raising public awareness and broadening support for the panel’s goals on chemicals, waste, and pollution.