



The 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

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The Asia-Pacific region—home to extraordinary biodiversity, Indigenous cultures, and rapidly urbanizing societies—faces increasing challenges from hazardous chemicals, waste mismanagement, and widespread pollution. These threats are worsened by climate vulnerability, economic inequalities, and limited scientific infrastructure in many countries.

As the Science-Policy Panel (SPP) evolves under the mandate of UNEA Resolution 5/8, the Panel's structure, scope, and operations must reflect and respond to the unique realities, capacities, and priorities of the Asia-Pacific region. This submission outlines key regional priorities and specific recommendations for consideration at [OEWG 3.2 – Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the Science-Policy Panel](#).

Regional Priorities for the Science-Policy Panel

1. Strengthening Regional Scientific and Technical Capacities

Many Asia-Pacific countries, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), face systemic gaps in scientific infrastructure, research capacity, and access to funding. To address this, the SPP must:

- Embed long-term capacity building as a core function, with a focus on improving chemical monitoring systems, waste tracking, and pollution data infrastructure;
- Provide dedicated financial and technical assistance to strengthen national laboratories, research institutions, and early warning systems;
- Support region-specific training for scientists, policymakers, and civil society to ensure widespread capacity for evidence-informed decision-making.

These investments are critical for empowering regional stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the global science-policy interface.

2. Advancing Equitable and Inclusive Participation

To uphold the SPP's legitimacy and effectiveness, it must reflect the diversity of Asia-Pacific voices. This includes:

- Guaranteeing equitable geographic representation across all SPP bodies, including the Bureau and scientific working groups;

- Actively involving civil society, including women and community scientists, Indigenous knowledge holders, youth, and representatives from frontline and environmental justice communities;
- Ensuring nomination processes are transparent, inclusive, and grounded in principles of gender equality and social equity;
- Institutionalizing diversity and inclusion through operational guidelines and accountability mechanisms.

3. Leveraging Regional Scientific Knowledge Systems

The Asia-Pacific region possesses deep reservoirs of scientific, community-based, and Indigenous knowledge on pollution, health, and sustainable practices. The SPP should:

- Establish mechanisms for contribution and ensure integration of Indigenous and local knowledge systems into assessments, methodologies, and policy guidance;
- Collaborate with existing regional institutions and civil society networks such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), including the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM).
- Establish decentralized regional science hubs or focal points to support two-way knowledge exchange and regional coordination.

4. Prioritizing the Unique and Urgent Needs of Pacific Island States

Pacific Island countries are on the frontlines of pollution impacts, particularly from transboundary marine plastic waste, toxic chemical exposure, and climate-induced vulnerabilities. The SPP must:

- Prioritize research on the health and ecological impacts of pollution in island ecosystems.
- Support the development of regional early warning systems and citizen science-based monitoring tools and platforms;
- Ensure the leadership and representation of Pacific stakeholders in SPP processes and decisions.

5. Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Pollution and toxic exposure are not gender-neutral. The SPP must apply an intersectional approach by:

- Requiring the use of gender-disaggregated and socially disaggregated data in research and assessments;
- Including gender and social inclusion experts across the Panel's governance and technical work;
- Supporting community-led and participatory research that centers the lived experiences of women, children, marginalized groups and vulnerable communities.

6. Safeguarding Independence, Integrity and Transparency

To ensure credibility and public trust, the SPP must:

- Adopt and enforce robust conflict of interest (COI) policies that apply to all experts, stakeholders, and partnerships;
- Require transparent disclosure of funding sources, affiliations, and institutional ties;
- Maintain open and inclusive stakeholder engagement, particularly in the development of assessments and policy recommendations.

Comments on Specific Documents

I. [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/6](#) – Foundational Document and Draft Decision

We welcome the inclusion of capacity building as one of the Panel’s core functions and stress the need for technical assistance and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

- **Scope and Functions (Section A):** Enhance regional capacities, ensure support for research infrastructure, and promote policy coherence through data-driven strategies.
- **Operating Principles (Section B):** Embrace multiple knowledge systems, including Indigenous and local knowledge. Establish regional databases and harmonize data collection methodologies to enable joint assessments and regional policy responses.
- **Institutional Arrangements (Section C):** Ensure openness to civil society, grassroots, and local scientific participation. Representation from all Asia-Pacific subregions—including LDCs and SIDS—must be guaranteed. Promote gender balance, inclusive education, and public awareness campaigns. Mobilize diverse funding streams, including green financing tools, while safeguarding against donor influence.

We further recommend:

- Affirming principles of equity, inclusion, and participation for marginalized and under-resourced stakeholders;
- Ensuring language accessibility, including translations into key regional languages;
- Recognizing and incorporating non-formal knowledge systems and Indigenous structures.

II. [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/7](#) – Draft Rules and Procedures and Related Decisions

- **Decision-Making and Representation:** Ensure meaningful participation from across Asia-Pacific, with a dedicated role for civil society observers.
- **Work Programme and Deliverables:** Maintain transparency in agenda-setting, review processes, and knowledge dissemination. Observer input should be actively solicited.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy:** We strongly support the application of the COI policy to all experts and partnerships, with clear disclosure requirements and procedures for managing both real and perceived conflicts.

III. [UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/8](#) – Interim Arrangements and Financial Procedures

- Maintain transparency in interim arrangements and ensure observer access to all preparatory and intersessional processes;

- Financial procedures should mandate full public disclosure of all contributions—monetary and in-kind—to prevent donor overreach and safeguard Panel independence.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Science-Policy Panel presents a critical opportunity to address the accelerating environmental and health crises driven by chemicals, waste, and pollution. For the Asia-Pacific region, this means ensuring inclusive and equitable participation, strengthening science-policy capacities, embracing local and Indigenous knowledge systems, and upholding environmental justice.

We call on the OEWG and the Secretariat to ensure that the SPP is built on the principles of transparency, diversity, accountability, and regional equity. The Panel must serve as a truly inclusive platform, responsive to the complex realities and aspirations of the Asia-Pacific and other underrepresented regions.

Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders

Regional Facilitators

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