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Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste

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**Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste**
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Agenda item 3(b) of the provisional agenda*
**Global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides**

# Global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides

## Note by the Secretariat

The annex to the present note contains a report on the establishment of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. It is reproduced as submitted by the task force convened to drive forward the process of establishing the alliance, comprised of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, UNEP and the World Health Organization.

The present note, including its annex, has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/1

# ANNEX

Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides

**Background information**

Highly hazardous pesticides are defined as those '*pesticides acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems (i.e., World Health Organization (WHO), Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Chemicals Classification and Labelling) or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous*' [1].

For over 20 years, the effective management of highly hazardous pesticides to reduce risks to human health and the environment has been a priority for many nations as reflected in actions already taken by countries to eliminate the harms from certain highly hazardous pesticides [2]. Furthermore, highly hazardous pesticide risk reduction has been a concern for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since 2006, at which time its council noted that the activities of FAO could include highly hazardous pesticide risk reduction, including a progressive ban [3]. In 2010, WHO issued a policy brief indicated that exposure to highly hazardous pesticides is a major public health concern causing widespread health problems and fatalities in many parts of the world [4].

In 2015, at the International Conference on Chemicals Management in its fourth session (ICCM4) highly hazardous pesticides were adopted as an issue of concern for chemicals management (resolution IV/3) [5]. Furthermore, FAO, WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) indicated the need for a globally coordinated approach to eliminating the harms from highly hazardous pesticides. This included an offer by the three organizations to develop modalities for international coordination to support countries to reduce the harms from highly hazardous pesticides in the context of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) [6] The need for a 'global alliance' was recognized in

[1] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization (2014) FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, Rome, Italy: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-CED-PHE-EPE-19.4.6
[2] Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (2023) IOMC report on SAICM emerging policy issues and other issues of concern: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/SAICM_ICCM.5_INF_16.pdf
[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006) Report of the council of FAO. Rome, Italy: https://www.fao.org/4/j8664e/j8664e.pdf
[4] World Health Organization (2010) Preventing disease through healthy environments: highly hazardous pesticides, a major public health concern, Geneva, Switzerland. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-CED-PHE-EPE-19.4.6
[5] International Conference on Chemicals Management (2015) Report of the Intentional Conference on Chemicals Management on the work of its fourth session: https://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/ICCM4/doc/K1606013_e.pdf
[6] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Environment Programme and World Health Organizations (2015) Proposal on Highly Hazardous Pesticides: https://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/ICCM4/doc/K1502177%20SAICM-ICCM4-8-e.pdf

supportive interventions and documents from conference stakeholders including possible terms of reference for such an alliance [7].

In 2016, a systematic approach to reducing the risks from highly hazardous pesticides was outlined by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPM) through its 'guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides' [8]. This included criteria for countries to identify highly hazardous pesticides among registered pesticide products, as well as a three-step process to manage highly hazardous pesticides through identification, risk assessment and mitigation of impacts.

In 2023, UNEP published 'guidelines on alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides' [9], which complemented the guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides [10]. Key information from these documents has been included with highly hazardous pesticides as a special topic in FAO's Pesticide Registration Toolkit [11]. The Pesticide Registration Toolkit was designed to support pesticide regulators in their decision-making processes, while the UNEP guideline is aimed at a broader audience of policymakers, decision makers and advisers from the agriculture, health and environment sectors who may wish to engage in those decision-making processes with an understanding of what is possible in terms of replacing highly hazardous pesticides.

**The Global Framework on Chemicals and highly hazardous pesticides**

During the intersessional process leading to the International Conference on Chemicals Management in its fifth session (ICCM5), representatives of the African Region submitted a draft resolution calling for the establishment of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. The revised and updated resolution, V/11, was subsequently adopted by ICCM5 [12]. Resolution V11 is closely aligned with target A7 of the Global Framework on Chemicals that states that '*by 2035, stakeholders have taken effective measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available; and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives*' [13]. As such a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides would play a key role in coordinating actions to meet target A7; moreover, a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides would also support the implementation of other, related targets, including targets B2, B5 and D5 among others.

[7] Pesticide Action network and POPs Elimination Network (2015) Highly Hazardous Pesticides: https://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/ICCM4/inf/ICCM4_INF32_IPEN_PAN_HHP_ToR.pdf
[8] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization (2016) Code of conduct on pesticide management: guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides. Rome, Italy. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7c65af6a-52ca-4e44-8c57-4303d076bea4/content
[9] United Nations Environment Programme (2023) Guidelines on alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides: https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/guidelines-alternatives-highly-hazardous-pesticides
[10] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization (2016) Code of conduct on pesticide management: guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides. Rome, Italy. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7c65af6a-52ca-4e44-8c57-4303d076bea4/content
[11] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2025) Pesticide Registration Toolkit: https://www.fao.org/pesticide-registration-toolkit/en/
[12] Global Framework on Chemicals (2023) resolutions: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/resolutions
[13] Global Framework on Chemicals (2024) Text of the global framework on chemicals: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/text-global-framework-chemicals

Resolution V/11 invited FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and WHO to coordinate the work of the alliance (within the scope of their available mandates and resources) with FAO as the lead organization [14]. The resolution was further supported by the United Nations Environmental Assembly at its sixth session (UNEA-6) through a call from the assembly for its members to join the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides [15].

**Initial work on establishing a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides**

Pursuant to the mandate set out in Resolution V/11 regarding the establishment of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides (hereinafter referred to as 'the alliance'), a task force was formed in November 2023 comprising experts from FAO, UNEP, WHO, and UNDP. The International Labour Organization (ILO) also participated as an observer pending further development of the alliance. Since its inception, the task force has convened regularly to drive forward the process of establishing the alliance.

In January 2025, UNEP hosted an in-person meeting of the task force with observers from ILO, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Discussions focused on defining the following elements of an operational framework for the alliance: goals and objectives; scope and application; organizational structure; public communication; and financial resources. Building on both the in-person and online meetings, the task force subsequently prepared a first draft of the operational framework.

A first stakeholder consultation was held in April 2025 via a webinar titled '*establishing a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides*' jointly organized by FAO, UNDP, UNEP, and WHO. The event provided a progress update on the establishment of the alliance and served as a platform to present and gather initial feedback on the draft operational framework from a wide range of interested stakeholders.

Over 500 registrations from 108 countries (Figure 1) were received for the webinar representing 326 entities (governments, non-government organizations, inter-governmental organizations, etc.) with a majority from Europe and Africa (Figure 2). Persons from a total of 119 government organizations from 63 countries registered, mainly representing agriculture, health and environment ministries; 98 civil society organizations, mainly representing environment and development sectors, and 38 private companies that included the chemical industry and advocates, private universities and hospitals, and banks and financial institutions.

[14] Global Framework on Chemicals (2023) resolutions: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/resolutions
[15] United Nations Environmental Program (2024) Outcomes of UNEA-6: https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/outcomes

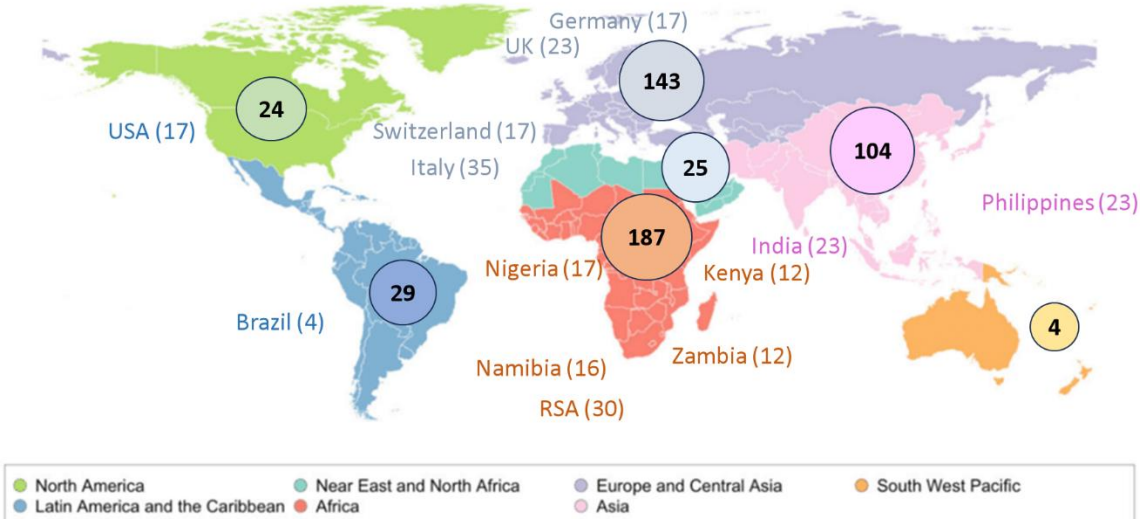


Figure 1. Registration for the FAO/UNDP/UNEP/WHO webinar of persons representing diverse stakeholders as potential members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. The numbers in circles indicate registrations from each of the seven FAO regions. Registrations from highly represented countries are indicated with the numbers of registrations in parentheses. Note that of 518 registrations, 227 attended the webinar.

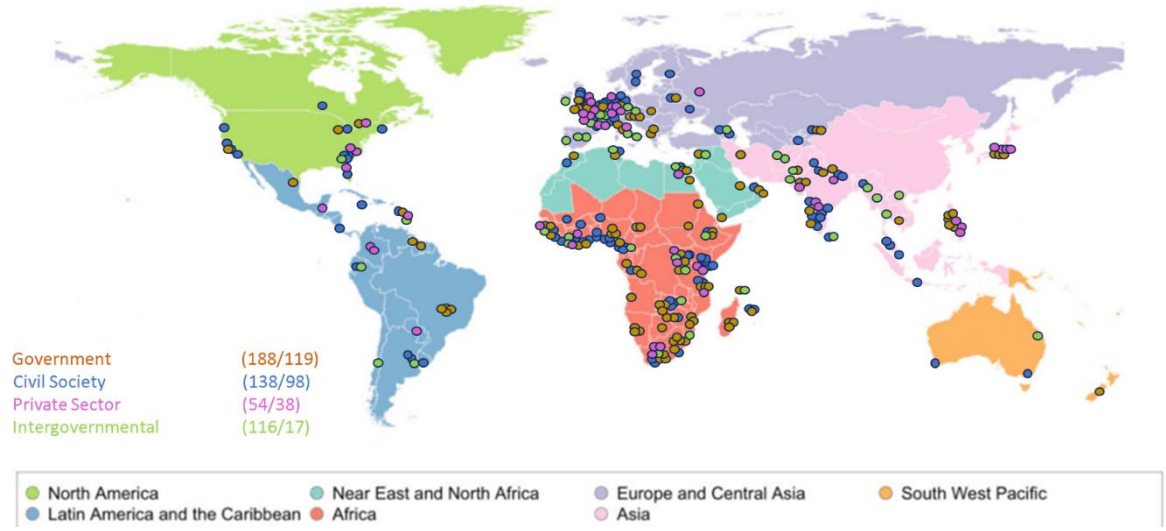


Figure 1. Registration for the FAO/UNDP/UNEP/WHO webinar of stakeholders (governments [orange symbols], non-government organizations [blue symbols], private sector (pink symbols), and inter-government organizations [green symbols]) as potential members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. The numbers in parentheses indicate registrations by entities, including subunits/departments (first number) and headquarters (second number) from each of the seven FAO regions. A total of 325 organizations registered for the webinar.

Over 200 people attended the webinar with the majority from Europe and Africa. Attendees were invited to ask questions or make comments regarding the operational framework and progress on establishing the alliance. Answers were given to these questions in real time and were subsequently distributed to all

webinar registrants. The draft operational framework was also distributed to all registrants together with a survey to capture stakeholder feedback and suggestions for the framework. This initial process has helped map and initiate communication with stakeholders interested in highly hazardous pesticides and as possible members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides.

**Next steps in establishing the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides**

The operational framework and survey will be circulated with responses received until mid-May 2025. After that time, the operational framework will be revised and all comments and queries answered. A revised operational framework will be presented at the Global Framework on Chemicals Open-Ended Working Group at a '*global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides workshop*'.

Led by FAO and supported by UNDP, UNEP, and WHO, the workshop will aim to deepen stakeholder engagement by sharing progress made, gathering additional input on the operational framework and proposed focal areas, and promote inclusive dialogue around the alliance's structure and priorities. The workshop will also invite stakeholders to express their interest in joining the alliance, highlight their potential contributions - particularly through technical expertise within proposed focal work areas - and signal their support for the alliance's objectives, including through financial or in-kind contributions.

It is envisaged that the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will be established, with membership received during 2025, and officially launched at the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session in 2026.

## ANNEX

### Text of the draft operational framework of the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides [16]

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and World Health Organization

1 Introduction

1. Highly Hazardous Pesticides are defined as those pesticides '*acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or Globally Harmonized System of Classification or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous*' [17].

2. The Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste includes Target A7 that '*by 2035, stakeholders have taken effective measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available; and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives*' [18].

3. Furthermore, the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session, under Resolution V/11 endorsed '*the formation of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides*' and invited '*the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization, within the scope of their respective mandates and available resources, to coordinate the work of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations taking the lead role*'. (Resolution V/11 Highly Hazardous Pesticides; Annex I)

4. The Conference further invited '*all interested stakeholders to become members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides and commit themselves to its overall goal and, where appropriate, to contribute financial or in-kind resources or expertise towards the development and implementation of its activities'*. (Resolution V/11 Highly Hazardous Pesticides [19])

5. In 2024, the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly under resolution 6/11 further invited '*Member States and all other relevant stakeholders to become members of the voluntary, multi-stakeholder global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides*' and encouraged '*Member States and*

[16] This draft operational framework was circulated to registrants of the FAO/UNDP/UNEP/WHO webinar
[17] Food and Agriculture Organization and World health Organization (2016) *International code of conduct on pesticide management: Guidelines on highly hazardous pesticides*. FAO, Rome, Italy.
[18] United Nations Environmental Program (2024) *Global Framework on Chemicals - For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste*. https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/strategic-objectives-and-targets
[19] Global Framework on Chemicals (2023) resolutions: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/page/resolutions

*other relevant stakeholders that are in a position to do so to carry out further research on safer and affordable alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides, as appropriate'* (UNEA-6 Resolution 6/11 Highly Hazardous Pesticides [20]).

2 Goal and Objectives

6. The Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides is a voluntary and multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to achieve targets related to highly hazardous pesticides, in particular Target A7 of the Global Framework of Chemicals.

7. The work of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 2.4 on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that help maintain ecosystems and target 3.9 on substantially reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

8. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will develop and implement an action plan with clear targets and milestones to monitor progress, developed in consultation with stakeholders and guided by the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management (2014)[21] and the related Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (2016) [22]. (Resolution V/11 Highly Hazardous Pesticides)

3 Scope and Application

9. The United Nations system has no universal list of highly hazardous pesticides. The identification of nationally registered pesticides as highly hazardous is conducted by each national government and its respective designated pesticide authority. Identification of HHPs is based mainly on active ingredients (although certain additives are listed under relevant conventions), that meet one or more criteria as outlined by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management [4]. These criteria are:

Criterion 1: Pesticide formulations that meet the criteria of classes Ia (extremely hazardous) or Ib (highly hazardous) of the WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard;
Criterion 2: Pesticide active ingredients and their formulations that meet the criteria of carcinogenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;

[20] United Nations Environmental Program (2024) Outcomes of UNEA-6: https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/outcomes
[21] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization (2014). *The International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management*; Rome, Italy. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789251085493
[22] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization (2016). *International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management: Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides*; Rome, Italy. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7c65af6a-52ca-4e44-8c57-4303d076bea4/content

Criterion 3: Pesticide active ingredients and their formulations that meet the criteria of mutagenicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;
Criterion 4: Pesticide active ingredients and their formulations that meet the criteria of reproductive toxicity Categories 1A and 1B of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;
Criterion 5: Pesticide active ingredients listed by the Stockholm Convention in its Annexes A and B, and those meeting all the criteria in paragraph 1 of Annex D of the Convention;
Criterion 6: Pesticide active ingredients and formulations listed by the Rotterdam Convention in its Annex III;
Criterion 7: Pesticides listed under the Montreal Protocol;
Criterion 8: Pesticide active ingredients and formulations that have shown a high incidence of severe or irreversible adverse effects on human health or the environment.

10. The FAO/WHO Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (2016) [4] describe a 3-step process for managing highly hazardous pesticides which stakeholders are encouraged to employ [4]. These three steps are:

    1. Identification of highly hazardous pesticides: Countries analyze their pesticide registries against the eight criteria to identify which pesticide products are highly hazardous.
    2. Needs and risk assessment of highly hazardous pesticides: Countries assess the actual needs and benefits for each product identified in the first step, as well as the associated risks to human health and the environment, taking into consideration available alternatives.
    3. Mitigation of risks associated with highly hazardous pesticides: Countries identify risk mitigation options. The most appropriate mitigation measures may be different for each highly hazardous pesticide and for each condition of use.

11. The FAO/WHO Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (2016) [4] suggests that '*for cases where highly hazardous pesticides pose high risks that are difficult to reduce while effective, less hazardous alternatives are available; the most effective option to mitigate such risks will often be to end its use through regulatory action*'. A key enabling factor in mitigation is the availability of alternatives.

## 4 Organizational Structure

12. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides is a voluntary and multi-stakeholder initiative working to implement relevant targets related to highly hazardous pesticides, in particular Target A7 of the Global Framework of Chemicals.

13. FAO, UNDP, UNEP and WHO, under the leadership of FAO, will form an 'ad-hoc UN task force', without secretarial duties, to facilitate the establishment of the Alliance. The UN organizations that form the ad-hoc task force will work within the scope of their respective mandates and available resources.

14. An 'alliance coordination team', will coordinate and report on the work of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides and acts as the alliance secretariat under the direction of the 'advisory council'. The "alliance coordination team will consist of representatives of technical working groups and advisory council, and members of the UN Ad Hoc task force.

15. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides is open to any stakeholders including but not limited to governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, industry, businesses, the financial sector, development banks, academia, workers' organizations, employers' organizations and retailers that support the alliance's goal and objectives.

16. Stakeholders interested in becoming members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will commit to its overall goal by contributing information and/or expertise and/or resources to the development and implementation of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides action plan as requested under resolution V/11.

17. To become a member, interested stakeholders should submit a letter to the alliance coordination team signifying their support for the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides and their commitment to achieving its goal, and specifying how they will contribute to attaining the goal of the alliance. Such 'letters of intention' will be made public through the website of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides after membership is accepted.

18. Broadly building on the 'FAO/WHO/UNEP Initial Considerations and Elements of an Action Plan on Highly Hazardous Pesticides' as outlined in the Annex I of the information document SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/16 [23], which was put forward at the Fifth Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, the work of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will be initially organized in four focal areas:
    a) Governance and policy to support regulation and implementation;
    b) Monitoring and surveillance;
    c) Promoting transition to sustainable crop production systems, that includes alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides;
    d) Knowledge dissemination, stakeholder engagement and concerted actions.

19. Each focal area will have a technical working group. The technical working groups represent the main implementation mechanism of the action plan of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. The technical working groups will be led by two co-chairs. The co-chairs nomination and selection process is facilitated by the coordination team. The co-chairs are expected to ensure active engagement and multi-stakeholder representation within the work of their respective technical working group. Stakeholders who have submitted their letter of intention to become a member of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides can indicate in the same which technical working group(s) they would like to join and contribute to. The terms of reference for

[23] FAO/ UNEP/WHO (2023) Initial Considerations and Elements of an Action Plan on Highly Hazardous Pesticides. Annex to the IOMC Report on SAICM Emerging Policy Issues and Other Issues of Concern.
https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/SAICM_ICCM.5_INF_16.pdf

the technical working groups and technical working group co-chairs will be developed separately.

20. The advisory council of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides has the role to provide strategic guidance, to inform activities across focal areas, and to review and monitor progress in each of the focal areas. The advisory council may propose additional focal areas where stakeholders indicate sufficient interest, ensuring the alignment with the goal and objectives of the alliance on highly hazardous pesticides as set out under resolution V/11.

21. The advisory council, composed of up to 20 members, is established to serve the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. The advisory council will be composed of representatives, which can include, but is not limited to: governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, industry, businesses, the financial sector, development banks, academia, workers' organizations and employers' organizations and retailers. Advisory council membership shall include participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and shall take into account geographical representation and gender balance.

22. The following representatives serve as members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides advisory council:
(i) The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides technical working group co-chairs.
(ii) Members nominated from the technical working groups.
(iii) Other representatives, as may be needed to meet the compositional requirements indicated in paragraph 20.

23. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides ad-hoc UN task force and representatives of the alliance coordination team will be represented ex-officio on the advisory council.

5 Public Communication

24. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides aims to conduct outreach and dissemination activities relating to its work to the wider stakeholder community subject to the availability of resources.

25. Members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides shall not use the names, emblems or logos of FAO, UNDP, UNEP or WHO in any manner or in any form without the expressed prior written approval of the relevant organization.

26. Reports and publications of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides to official bodies will be prepared by the alliance coordination team and reviewed by the ad-hoc UN task force in accordance with organizational procedures, and approved by the Advisory council.

27. Members may not speak on behalf of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. Any person who communicates in any form/media about the work of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides must indicate that he/she is representing personal views.

28. The name global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides shall not be used for commercial or promotional activities.

29. Information and resources, prepared and published by the contributors to the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides may on occasion be listed on the website of the alliance. Listing of such resources on the website does not imply that they are preferred to other similar resources, endorsed, or recommended by FAO, UNDP, UNEP or WHO. Furthermore, the four United Nations organizations cannot attest to the accuracy of any information provided by contributors.

6 Financial Resources

30. The global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides is not a financial mechanism. Members of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides are responsible for funding activities contributing to the implementation of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides action plan.

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