

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

Distr.: Limited

25 June 2025

Original: English

**Open-ended Working Group of the
Global Framework on Chemicals – for a
Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste
First meeting**
Punta del Este, Uruguay, 24–27 June 2025

Draft report of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste on the work of its first meeting

Introduction

1. The International Conference on Chemicals Management, at its fifth session, held in Bonn, Germany, in September 2023, adopted the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste; the Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste; and a set of resolutions required for the implementation of the Framework. The Global Framework on Chemicals is the successor framework instrument to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
2. In its resolution II/6, the International Conference on Chemicals Management, at its second session, held in Geneva in May 2009, established an Open-ended Working Group as a subsidiary body of the Conference. It also decided that the Open-ended Working Group would meet once in the year prior to sessions of the Conference. That decision was confirmed by the Conference, at its third session, held in Nairobi in September 2012, in its resolution III/5.
3. Accordingly, the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste held its first meeting at the Convention and Exhibition Centre, Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 24 to 27 June 2025.

I. Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, 24 June 2025 by Kay Williams, Coordinator of the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals. Welcoming participants, she recalled that, the previous week, an important win had been achieved for multilateralism and for the Global Framework on Chemicals through the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution. The focus of the current meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals was on the implementation of the Framework and preparations for the first session of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals. She encouraged all stakeholders to engage and work together for the successful implementation of the Framework.
5. Opening statements were delivered by Santos Virgilio, Vice-President of the Bureau of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals; Alejandro Nario, National Director of Quality and Environmental Assessment, Uruguay; Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and Tessa Goverse, Principal Coordinator, secretariat 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.

6. In his opening statement, Mr. Virgilio said that the purpose of the current meeting was for participants to exchange views, build collaboration, discuss and draft texts or recommendations and learn about approaches that would transform chemicals and waste management and inform the deliberations of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session, in 2026, rather than to adopt decisions and resolutions. He encouraged participants to share their experience and expertise, and to assist others with implementation challenges.
7. Delivering his opening remarks, Mr. Nario said that the recent establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was a historic step forward and a great multilateral achievement that would allow rigorous science to directly feed into policymaking in that area. It had shown that it was possible to build consensus in a world shaken by conflict, geopolitical tensions and setbacks in international cooperation. A more holistic, proactive and collaborative approach to the management of chemicals and hazardous waste, which posed a serious threat to humanity and ecosystems, was required, as was the strengthening of the understanding and management of emerging chemicals. The Global Framework on Chemicals had enormous potential to foster collaborative spaces and peer-to-peer learning, and to adapt to the needs of each country. Without capacity-building, clear rules, financial mechanisms and political will, however, knowledge would not be translated into real change. Effective implementation required concrete action such as technical cooperation and adequate financing. Regional and subregional realities and the countries that were using and producing chemicals needed to be taken into account, and the fragmentation of information had to be addressed.
8. Work upstream in designing safe products, processes and materials, rather than mitigating damage once it had been caused, was the only real way to reduce risks and protect human health and the environment, while avoiding rising costs and the need for ever more complex and inaccessible solutions. Civil society and the academic community, as important drivers of innovation, provided knowledge and ensured informed and people-centred transitions. The private sector should play a central role in sharing information throughout the supply chain to ensure traceability and allow informed decision-making, and development banks and financial institutions should consider environmental and social criteria when funding new technologies. The Global Framework on Chemicals represented a key opportunity to continue transforming chemicals management and improve the health of people and the planet.
9. In her opening statement, Ms. Aggarwal-Khan recalled the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals, which contained 28 targets to guide States and other stakeholders in the sound management of chemicals and waste, by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its fifth session. While chemicals were used in almost every aspect of life – such as in agriculture, healthcare and manufacturing – they presented certain risks, including pollution, which led to 9 million deaths globally every year. The Framework provided the means to go beyond those risks to seek out opportunities; for example, industries had asked for a level playing field so that they could operate in various countries without having to contend with differing legislative jurisdictions and nascent markets for green chemistry were opening that could be scaled up.
10. At the current meeting, the Open-ended Working Group had the chance to innovate and brainstorm across stakeholders on the life cycle of chemicals and on measurability and indicators. In the lead-up to the meeting, delegates had heard from the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) on the work being done to help countries in setting up their basic chemicals management capacities, institutions and systems. Some States had requested guidance, including on legislation and on the establishment of an enabling environment for chemicals management; others had asked about how to enact fiscal and extended producer responsibility policies to unlock the necessary financing. While grants were available under the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, innovative, additional sources of funding and fiscal policies were needed. The current meeting was also the occasion to consider how chemicals were used in various industry sectors and to factor in business and social issues, such as the environment, health and labour. The Open-ended Working Group thus had an opportunity to explore genuine multi-stakeholder, multisectoral collaboration, with a view to delivering on the targets of the Framework.
11. In her opening remarks, Ms. Goverse said that, in March 2022, the international community had requested the establishment of a science-policy panel on chemicals and waste, which had been lacking for decades; in June 2025, that long-awaited panel – the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution – had been set up, completing the trifecta of panels addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Since 1987, the international community had been able to turn to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for climate science and, since 2012, to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for science and knowledge on nature and biodiversity loss.

Now, following a historic milestone for multilateralism, it could turn to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, which would provide the best-available science to inform policy and decision-making, help in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and international frameworks, and drive innovation and solutions for years to come. It would share information with policymakers, in particular those in developing countries, and integrate capacity-building into all aspects of its work. It would support the chemicals and waste cluster and help to strengthen collective action on the subject. UNEP was ready to host the Panel and to take the necessary steps towards its full operationalization.

II. Organizational matters

12. Introducing the item, the Vice-President of the Bureau of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals said that the rules of procedure of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, as contained in the annex to resolution II/1 of the Conference, would be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the Open-ended Working Group.

A. Adoption of the agenda

13. In considering the sub-item, the Open-ended Working Group had before it the provisional agenda (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/1) and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/1/Add.1).

14. The Open-ended Working Group adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Global Framework on Chemicals:
 - (a) Implementation arrangements (resolution V/8);
 - (b) Global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides (resolution V/11);
 - (c) Global Framework on Chemicals Fund (resolution V/3);
 - (d) Gender action plan (resolution V/4);
 - (e) Emerging policy issues and issues of concern (resolution V/5);
 - (f) International cooperation and coordination (resolution V/6);
 - (g) National focal points (resolution V/7);
 - (h) Measurability structure and indicators (resolution V/9);
 - (i) Health surveillance systems (resolution V/10);
 - (j) Capacity-building.
4. Financial considerations (resolution V/3):
 - (a) Assessing the existing financial and investment flows as well as financial needs associated with the implementation of the Framework;
 - (b) Costs of inaction.
5. Programme of work and draft budget of the secretariat for the period 2024–2026 (resolution V/12).
6. Preparations for the first session of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
9. Closure of the meeting.

B. Election of officers

15. The Open-ended Working Group decided to appoint Přemysl Štěpánek (Czechia) and Vanessa Aliaga (Peru) as Co-Chairs and Magdalena Frydrych (Poland) as Rapporteur.

C. Organization of work

16. The Open-ended Working Group agreed to organize the work of its first session as outlined in the revised tentative schedule of work, the annotated provisional agenda and the scenario note (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/1/Rev.1, UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/1/Add.1 and UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/2).

17. It was agreed that the Open-ended Working Group could establish contact groups or informal discussion groups as it deemed necessary, with meetings of those groups to be conducted in English only.

D. Attendance

18. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Governments: [--].

19. Representatives of [--] also attended the meeting.

20. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, secretariats of other intergovernmental organizations, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and other entities attended: [--].

21. Representatives of the following non-governmental, industry, academic and other entities attended: [--].

III. Global Framework on Chemicals**A. Implementation arrangements (resolution V/8)**

22. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the relevant documentation, including a note by the secretariat on the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/8) and information documents on the development of Global Framework on Chemicals implementation programmes to advance integrated chemicals and waste management (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11) and on the role of chemicals and waste management in fostering sustainability and circularity (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/13). She noted that the Executive Director of UNEP had mobilized considerable corporate resources to facilitate the establishment of the secretariat and a trust fund, as well as to implement resolutions, while IOMC participating organizations had worked extensively to support the development of implementation programmes.

23. A representative of IOMC provided an overview of the activities that had been supported by IOMC, in cooperation and consultation with stakeholders, with a view to collaborating and developing proposals on implementation programmes, in accordance with International Conference on Chemicals Management resolution V/8 on implementation arrangements. A number of intersessional activities had been carried out, including webinars, global surveys and multi-stakeholder workshops, with the aim of furthering the consultation process and drafting the mandates, terms of reference and workplans of the implementation programmes. Document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11 contained proposals to advance three implementation programmes, based on input from more than 500 stakeholder participants. IOMC and its participating organizations had supported those activities through internal financial and in-kind resources; however, those resources had now been exhausted. Any future work would not be possible without new and additional resources.

24. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, and some observers, took the floor, with many welcoming the activities carried out by UNEP and the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals, as well as IOMC participating organizations, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Framework. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries welcomed the creation of a dedicated trust fund for the Framework, to which more than \$28 million had so far been contributed. Another representative said that her Government had made a contribution to support IOMC in its work and encouraged every country and stakeholder in a position to do so to do the same.

25. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and a number of observers emphasized the importance of the implementation programmes, in particular programmes 1 and 2, which were considered to be essential tools for translating the Framework's ambition into concrete action. One representative called for the strengthened participation of developing countries in the drafting of the implementation programmes, emphasizing that a key component of the implementation programmes and workplans should be capacity-building for developing countries. Another added that international cooperation and technology transfer should also be among the main priorities of the implementation arrangements. One representative suggested that the focus of the implementation programmes should be on best practices for chemicals management, including risk-based approaches, and not on the development of a global list of chemicals of concern.

26. Regarding implementation programme 1, on strengthening legal frameworks and institutional capacities for chemicals management, one representative underscored the importance of ensuring that countries had the capacity to conduct risk assessments and emphasized the obstacles faced by developing countries in that regard. The same representative, supported by another who spoke on behalf of a group of countries, said that implementation programme 1 should include not only capacity-building but also technology transfer initiatives and infrastructure development. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries highlighted other critical priorities for developing countries, which included adaptable model legislation, accompanied by practical implementation road maps to support national regulatory frameworks. Together with an observer, he underscored the importance of baseline assessments to identify regional disparities and country-specific capacity-building needs. In addition to road maps for implementation and adaptable model legislation, the same observer suggested the inclusion of enforcement measures, the integration of sustainable financial mechanisms into legal frameworks and the involvement of the regulated community in policymaking. She emphasized the need for consistency of approach at the global and regional levels and the value of strong public-private partnerships, which could provide guidance and best practices.

27. Concerning implementation programme 2, on strengthening economic and industry sector engagement and action for the sound management of chemicals along value chains, one representative stressed that the transition to safer alternatives to hazardous substances should not exacerbate existing global inequalities. He drew attention to the fact that many modern solutions were protected by intellectual property rights, creating barriers to access for developing countries. Collaborative mechanisms, such as voluntary licencing, open innovation platforms and technical partnerships, should be explored. The success of the implementation programmes hinged on the availability of dedicated and predictable funding, for which reason specific funding lines, such as on project preparation, technical assistance, regional workshops and institutional strengthening, should be established. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries added that the financial mechanisms embedded in national legal systems were required to facilitate the transition to safer alternatives – particularly in the agriculture and health sectors – and ensure sustainability.

28. An observer highlighted the value of sector-based approaches and the importance of strong engagement across the entire value chain. Another observer said that, in addition to national implementation programmes, it was equally important to enable targeted action by the private sector. He expressed the hope that, through multi-stakeholder efforts in sectors such as textiles and healthcare, proactive collaboration between stakeholders, including civil society, would be encouraged and industry-sector programmes could be designed for consideration and possible adoption by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals. Another observer said that the production, packaging, transportation and use and disposal of healthcare products were major contributors to climate change, chemical contamination, resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and air and water pollution. An industry-specific implementation programme on the healthcare sector, with targeted funding, would contribute to supporting the goal of eliminating unnecessary plastics, particularly single-use plastics, achieving the alignment of international objectives, standards and regulations, and improving transparency across the plastics and chemicals value chains.

29. With regard to implementation programme 3, on integrating chemicals and waste issues in sustainable development decision-making, an observer expressed support for the inclusion of chemicals and education as a topic under the implementation programme, drawing attention to the gap in education and awareness-raising on chemical safety and waste management and highlighting the need to strengthen the role of academia in capacity-building on chemicals management and empower young people with the necessary skills to achieve the goals of the Framework. Another representative stated that, given the limited resources available, it would be advisable to focus efforts on implementation programmes 1 and 2, which were key to the successful implementation of the Framework.

30. One representative outlined her Government's policy with regard to issues of gender, climate and the Sustainable Development Goals. On gender, she explained that her Government recognized two sexes, male and female, and used clear and accurate language that recognized that women were biologically female and men were biologically male. Her Government expected that the United Nations would align its documentation and programming with that policy, including by using terminology that clearly referred to women and men, girls and boys, and avoiding the use of ambiguous terms. Regarding climate issues, rather than general references to climate change as a policy matter or a root cause of threats, the focus should be on specific environmental threats, such as threats to clean air and clean water, wildfires, floods, drought and sea level rise, and on sensible environmental protections, such as increasing access to affordable, reliable and secure energy and enhancing resilience and disaster planning. Finally, her Government would no longer affirm as a matter of course the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the Sustainable Development Goals, which were a form of soft global governance that impinged on State sovereignty.

31. Responding to a question on the status of the draft mandates, terms of reference and workplans for the implementation programmes, which were contained in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/11, the representative of IOMC explained that the idea was for IOMC participating organizations and stakeholders who had taken part in the drafting process to propose textual changes. On the basis of discussions and feedback received, a paper would be drafted for the consideration of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session.

32. The Open-ended Working Group decided to establish a contact group on implementation arrangements, to be co-facilitated by Linda Kosgei (Kenya) and Sam van de Snepscheut (Kingdom of the Netherlands).

33. [to be completed]

B. Global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides (resolution V/11)

34. [to be completed]

C. Global Framework on Chemicals Fund (resolution V/3)

35. Introducing the sub-item and reporting on the work of the Executive Board of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Co-Chair of the Board, Ivo de Zwaan, drew attention to the information contained in documents UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/3 and UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/5 on the activities undertaken since the establishment of the Fund. During the first round of applications launched in October 2024, the Fund had received 105 applications from 77 countries. Despite the unexpectedly high level of demand, the Executive Board had given all the applications due consideration through a structured and transparent process that prioritized quality, transformative potential and strategic alignment with the Global Framework on Chemicals. The Executive Board had approved applications for four regional projects supporting 11 countries. A second round of funding was planned for September–October 2025.

36. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed that wording related to the likely exclusion of countries listed by the World Bank as high-income countries should be deleted from section D of annex 2 to project application form A, given the eligibility rules annexed to International Conference on Chemicals Management resolution V/3, according to which the Fund was to be fully operationalized and made accessible to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, stressed that all developing countries should be treated without differentiation, and the procedures for accessing applications should be consistent and transparent. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the amount of funding and variety of sources of the Trust Fund should be increased to boost the number of eligible projects that could be approved, while others, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the need for greater clarity and transparency regarding the project selection criteria. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries expressed concern at the low number of projects that had been selected and the small percentage of available funds that had been disbursed, noting that national projects appeared to be at a disadvantage compared to regional proposals.

37. Several observers expressed concern at the barriers to the submission and approval of applications from civil society organizations. One said that greater involvement of civil society in the Executive Board could increase the transparency, credibility and accessibility of the Fund, and several

said that the previous experience of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Quick Start Programme had shown projects involving civil society to be highly effective. One observer said that inadequate funding posed a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals and indicated that the polluter pays principle should be applied to generate adequate, predictable and sustainable funding from the private sector, and that collaboration between the Global Environment Facility and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund should be ensured.

38. Subsequently, the Open-ended Working Group agreed to establish an informal group to gather the views of stakeholders. The suggestions collected would be used in the preparation of a proposal for revised terms of reference for submission by the Executive Board of the Fund to the International Conference for consideration at its first session. The group was to be guided by International Conference on Chemicals Management resolution V/3 on financial considerations and various documents, including documents UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/3 and UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/5. The co-facilitators of the contact group would be Santos Virgilio (Angola) and Ivo de Zwaan (Kingdom of the Netherlands), given their roles as Co-Chairs of the Executive Board of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund.

39. [to be completed]

D. Gender action plan (resolution V/4)

40. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a note by the secretariat on the gender action plan (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/4).

41. A representative of the Multi-stakeholder Processes for Sustainable Development (MSP Institute) presented an information document on the development of a gender action plan (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/6), setting out, in a first annex, a report prepared by the MSP Institute, in consultation with the secretariat, on the development of the gender action plan; in a second annex, submissions received in response to the call for information on the integration of a gender perspective into policies, plans and actions within the framework of chemicals and waste management; and in a third annex, elements to be considered in the development of the gender action plan. She said that the information set out in the document and the three annexes thereto had been instrumental in the initial analysis of existing information and in initiating the development of essential elements of the gender action plan of the Global Framework on Chemicals, including the convening of a second webinar. In the coming months, the Institute intended to incorporate submissions to ensure consistency and coherence between the gender action plan and the implementation programmes, measurability and indicators, principles and strategic objectives of the Framework, and she therefore encouraged Governments and stakeholders to share their inputs for the gender action plan at the current meeting, including by submitting them to the secretariat.

42. Many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, and some observers, welcomed the progress reported on implementing resolution V/4 and developing the gender action plan for the Framework. Several stressed the essential nature of such a plan for ensuring equitable and inclusive policies and action for the sound management of chemicals and waste and achieving real change on the ground, with some pointing out that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the impacts of toxic chemicals. Many, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, encouraged parties to continue implementing resolution V/4 and expressed support for continued work on developing the plan, and several, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, urged others to continue sharing their experiences, best practices and proposals.

43. Many of those who spoke highlighted aspects that they considered particularly important for a gender action plan. Several spoke about the need to disaggregate data, with one calling for disaggregation beyond gender to include sex, age, disability, ethnicity and region. Intersectionality was also mentioned as an important consideration by one representative and several observers, including intersectionality of gender with youth, indigenous identity, African descent, socioeconomic status and occupational exposure. One observer called for the development of specific and gender responsive indicators and monitoring mechanisms that would enable Governments and other stakeholders to establish baselines and measure progress, and another said that adequate and sustained financing for gender responsive initiatives, including support for women, lead and grassroots organizations, was also critical, as was targeted research.

44. A number of representatives and several observers called for greater participation of women in decision-making processes, including by ensuring gender balance across the governance and decision-making bodies of the Framework. One representative, however, explicitly rejected the conclusion, as expressed in the report on development of the gender action plan, that gender equality

was a fundamental principle and that every work programme, project and activity should therefore be systematically designed and executed with a gender perspective, and called for the use of terminology clearly referring to women and men and girls and boys.

45. The Open-ended Working Group took note of the progress made on the issue and agreed that the comments provided would be reflected in the present report.

E. Emerging policy issues and issues of concern (resolution V/5)

46. [to be completed]

F. International cooperation and coordination (resolution V/6)

47. [to be completed]

G. National focal points (resolution V/7)

48. [to be completed]

H. Measurability structure and indicators (resolution V/9)

49. [to be completed]

I. Health surveillance systems (resolution V/10)

50. [to be completed]

J. Capacity-building

51. [to be completed]

IV. Financial considerations (resolution V/3)

A. Assessing the existing financial and investment flows as well as financial needs associated with the implementation of the Framework

52. Introducing the sub-item, a representative of the secretariat provided an overview of a note by the secretariat on financial considerations (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/2) and another entitled “Financial arrangements: Chemical use in textile value chains: Cotton clothing” (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/3/Rev.1).

53. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the initiative undertaken by the secretariat in collaboration with the participating organizations of IOMC to assess existing financial and investment flows as well as financial needs associated with the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that rapid and effective finalization of the terms of reference for the updated report on the cost of inaction would be crucial, as that study had significant value in ensuring the achievement of the objectives and targets of the Framework. She sought clarification from the secretariat on the plan for raising funds to carry out the second phase of that study.

54. Responding to the comments relating to the report, a representative of UNEP said that the points mentioned would be taken into consideration for further work, and that additional information on the content of the document could be provided upon request.

55. One representative proposed the inclusion in the draft decision under the proposed action in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/2 of a request for the secretariat, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy, grounded in the findings of the ongoing needs assessment and fully aligned with target E3 of the Global Framework on Chemicals. He suggested that the draft resource mobilization strategy be considered for possible adoption by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session, in 2026. Such a strategy should aim to ensure the identification and mobilization of adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources in support of national implementation efforts. While private sector engagement was fundamental, public concessional financing remained indispensable in providing direct support, de-risking investments, enhancing the viability of national initiatives and leveraging additional resources through co-financing arrangements in developing countries with fiscal constraints.

Such financing could also play a catalytic role in promoting innovation and scalable solutions, ensuring that promising initiatives were not left behind due to a lack of access to capital. The ambition embodied in the Global Framework on Chemicals could only be realized if matched by robust and reliable implementation pathways that responded to the realities of developing countries. The secretariat and relevant stakeholders could be provided with a mandate to begin developing a resource mobilization strategy for consideration and possible adoption by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session. A number of representatives said that the only body that should operationalize resources was the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, through a consensus-based approach that was driven by States rather than donors.

56. In response to the request to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy, a representative of UNEP said that the Open-ended Working Group could make a consensus-based decision on that matter and, in such a case, the secretariat would treat the proposal in the same manner as a draft decision.

57. Some representatives expressed concerns over the language used in the recommendations for consideration by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals. One representative highlighted the fact that the note by the secretariat on financial considerations included a specific reference to investment decisions compliance under the Global Framework on Chemicals, as well as to the development of indicative criteria. While she supported efforts to equip investors with more information and guidance to favour the achievement of the objectives of the Framework, such language did not fall within the scope of the overarching resolution, and instead constituted a new branch of work. A decision to include such work, which was technically complex and resource intensive, could only be taken by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals, and would require significant prior discussion. Moreover, said the same representative, the language on compliance as currently drafted was not appropriate in the context of a non-legally-binding framework. Some representatives said that its inclusion was cause for concern, given, said one, that it conflicted with the voluntary nature of the Framework itself. One representative also sought clarification of whether the intention was to move the text in question forward in some way.

58. One representative said that, given that several activities were currently in the early stages of development under the potential implementation programme on strengthening economic and industry sector engagement and actions along value chains that were relevant to investors, any intersessional work should be focused on that area. Turning to the documents under consideration, another representative underscored the need to focus and streamline efforts, particularly in the light of the challenging fiscal situation, including in terms of the finances of the secretariat. That situation meant that it was much too early, at the beginning of the current meeting, to bypass discussions and reach conclusions requesting the secretariat to increase its workload, although, she noted, such conclusions might be an outcome of deliberations by the end of the meeting. One representative said that it was important to clearly define the extent to which the Open-ended Working Group could provide the secretariat with developments for consideration by the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals at its first session.

59. In response to the concerns raised, a representative of UNEP clarified that the work of the Open-ended Working Group was to take stock of the efforts underway to implement the relevant resolutions. The documents under consideration explained the different aspects of the current status of work. If any additional work needed to be carried out, the Open-ended Working Group could put forward suggestions in that regard for consideration, provided that the necessary resources were available. At the same time, the Open-ended Working Group would not be able to change the mandate provided by the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

60. The Co-Chair of the meeting said that, given the lack of consensus expressed for the proposed actions set out in subparagraph 9 (b) of document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/2, the matters in question would be referred to the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals for further consideration. With regard to the resource mobilization strategy proposal, that idea could be temporarily set aside and explored in the contact group on programme of work, staffing and budget, established under agenda item 5, as described in paragraph 70 of the present report, for further consideration by the Open-ended Working Group.

61. [to be completed]

B. Costs of inaction

62. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the note by the secretariat on financial considerations (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/2) and an information document containing an update on progress towards developing a “costs of inaction” study

(UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/4), which included initial terms of reference for the update on the 2013 costs of inaction report on the sound management of chemicals.

63. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, and an observer welcomed the work done on developing the terms of reference for the update of the costs of inaction report, noting the significance of the updated report for the achievement of the objectives and targets of the Framework.

64. One representative expressed appreciation for the proposed approach to updating the report, including in particular the focus on assessing the benefits of early action and preventing costs from materializing, which would be fundamental for informing policies and regulations that supported the transition to safer and more sustainable chemicals, products and materials. Her delegation strongly supported continued work by the secretariat, in collaboration with the participating organizations, and encouraged the exploration of all available options to mobilize the necessary financial resources. Another representative suggested that more developing country experts be encouraged to participate in updating process.

65. The observer recommended that the updated report look closely at the children and youth population, which bore most of the human health costs of inaction. She also proposed five elements for incorporation in the update: more child and adolescent health research publications in the literature review; a dedicated section on the value of reducing chemical risks to children and adolescents; identification of research gaps; consideration of societal values beyond conventional economic framing including nature loss, cultural heritage and overall human well-being; and future risk projections.

66. The Open-ended Working Group agreed that the comments provided would be reflected in the present report.

V. Programme of work and draft budget of the secretariat for the period 2024–2026 (resolution V/12)

67. Introducing the sub-item, a representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the information contained in the note by the secretariat on programme of work, staffing and budget (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/11).

68. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed their appreciation for the work of the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals, including the establishment of its secretariat and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund. Given the multisectoral and multidisciplinary nature of the Framework, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries expressed strong support for activities aimed at enhancing communication and coordination, through the designation of focal points from all relevant sectors and strengthening collaboration with the newly established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution. One representative said that transitioning to alternatives to chemicals should be considered in terms of accessibility, especially for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

69. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries expressed deep concern over the projected funding shortfalls for the Global Framework on Chemicals secretariat, which highlighted the critical need for adequate, predictable and sustainable financing from all partners. In addition, regional meetings, the development of guidelines for national focal points, technical support and capacity-building, including to address regional disparities, were vital elements for advancing national implementation. Given that such initiatives remained contingent on voluntary contributions, the secretariat should explore additional funding opportunities such as co-financing strategies. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the private sector could contribute actively in that regard, including through the meaningful direct involvement of industry actors themselves rather than industry associations, which might withhold or filter critical information. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the possible role of various stakeholders and asked for details of how the financial gap pertaining to the functioning of the secretariat in 2025 and 2026 would be covered. One representative said that, in the light of ongoing resource constraints, the focus of the programme of work and budget should be on core secretariat functions and how existing capital was spent, rather than recruiting staff other than those in essential roles or allocating resources to initiatives beyond the scope of the secretariat. In that regard, clarity on how staffing was being prioritized until 2026 would be welcome.

70. The Open-ended Working Group agreed to establish a contact group on the programme of work, staffing and budget, co-chaired by Jonah Ormond (Antigua and Barbuda) and Isabel Mayr (Canada), to discuss the matter further.

71. [to be completed]

VI. Preparations for the first session of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals

72. [to be completed]

VII. Other matters

73. [to be completed]

VIII. Adoption of the report of the meeting

74. [to be completed]

IX. Closure of the meeting

75. [to be completed]

ADVANCE