



**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**
Third session
Geneva, 17–21 June 2024

Draft report of the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to further contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

Introduction

1. On 2 March 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, in resolution 5/8, decided that a science-policy panel should be established to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. The Environment Assembly also decided to convene, subject to the availability of resources, an ad hoc open-ended working group that would begin its work in 2022, with the ambition of completing it by the end of 2024.
2. The third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group was held at the International Conference Centre Geneva from 17 to 21 June 2024.

I. Opening of the session

3. The meeting was opened at 10.05 a.m. on Monday, 17 June 2024, by Gudi Alkemade (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Chair 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. Welcoming participants, she urged them to use their time wisely and engage constructively at the current session to build on the work carried out at previous sessions in order to unlock the potential of a science-policy panel to facilitate the transition to resilient and sustainable pathways towards a pollution-free planet.
4. Opening statements were delivered by Katrin Schneeberger, Director, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland; Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on behalf of Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP; Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, World Health Organization (WHO).
5. In her opening statement, Ms. Schneeberger said that, to enable global environmental challenges to be addressed, policymakers must be well informed and their decisions scientifically robust. As the final round of negotiations began on the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, there was no need to reinvent the wheel: the structure, experience and best practices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) provided examples on which to draw.

6. The new panel would serve policymakers and other stakeholders, covering policy areas ranging from health and the environment, to agriculture and the circular economy. It would deliver policy-relevant scientific evidence and provide a holistic view of technical, economic, social and other aspects of relevant issues. Broad expertise and participation would therefore be needed, in particular to give appropriate attention to the interlinkages between environmental pollution and public health. A UNEP-WHO secretariat providing joint services could contribute to achieving that objective, enabling access to the technical, political and organizational expertise of two organizations and their networks of experts. The ad hoc open-ended working group's task was to finalize the necessary documents so that the forthcoming intergovernmental meeting could establish a credible, transparent and impartial science-policy panel.

7. In her statement, Ms. Aggarwal-Khan said that the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group had come at a pivotal juncture: the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste had been adopted, and negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, were expected to be completed in 2024. However, the global goal to minimize adverse impacts of chemicals and waste by 2020 had not been achieved, and waste management costs were forecast to double over the next 25 years. A chemicals-related science-policy panel was thus needed to aid in the achievement of relevant internationally agreed targets.

8. At its first two sessions, the ad hoc open-ended working group had emphasized that the panel should build strong links to policy; evaluate the full life cycle of chemicals, from their production, usage and eventual environmental and health impacts; foster transparency and trust; and pursue interdisciplinary approaches. Broad stakeholder engagement was required to promote inclusiveness and leverage knowledge from non-governmental organizations, scientists, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and industry and financial players, among others. The resulting panel would deal not only with the environmental and health angles of the sound management of chemicals but also with the attendant social and economic issues that Governments faced.

9. In his statement, Mr. Ghebreyesus said that one of the key priorities of the recently adopted WHO fourteenth general programme of work for the period 2025–2028 was to promote health and prevent disease by addressing the root causes of ill health, including those related to the environment. Almost a quarter of deaths globally were linked to environmental conditions, with chemicals, waste and pollution among the leading culprits. Low- and middle-income countries bore the greatest disease burden, and the situation was only worsening. Building healthier environments thus held huge potential for protecting the health of people and of the planet.

10. WHO supported the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute to reversing current trends and implementing evidence-based solutions. Alongside IPCC and IPBES, the science-policy panel would serve as a third pillar in efforts to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution. WHO was committed to participating in the science-policy panel, including by developing a proposal for a UNEP-WHO secretariat providing joint services. The panel should take a strategic approach to its work to strengthen collaboration; foster multisectoral engagement, including with the public and private sectors; use science, research and innovation to drive progress; complement and build on the work of WHO and other scientific organizations; and focus on aspects of prevention.

II. Election of officers

11. The Chair recalled that, at its first and second sessions, the ad hoc open-ended working group had elected her to serve as Chair and the following individuals to serve as Vice-Chairs of the Bureau: Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda); Jinhui Li (China); Cyrus Mageria (Kenya) (Rapporteur); Oumar Diaouré Cisse (Mali); Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan); Alexandru Roznov (Romania), Michel Tschirren (Switzerland); Roman Filonenko (Ukraine) and Judith Torres (Uruguay). In the intersessional period between the second and third sessions, Mr. Mageria had been replaced by Linda Kosgei (Kenya) (Rapporteur), who had been elected by means of a silence procedure.

III. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters:

A. Adoption of the agenda

12. The Chair recalled that, at its second session, the ad hoc open-ended working group had endorsed the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated agenda (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1/Add.1):

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Organizational matters.
2. Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel.
3. Recommendations to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme for the preparation of the intergovernmental meeting to establish the science-policy panel.
4. Other matters.
5. Adoption of the report of the session.
6. Closure of the session.

B. Organizational matters

13. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to organize the work of its third session in accordance with the draft annotated agenda (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1/Add.1) and the scenario note (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/1), on the understanding that the tentative schedule for the session, including for the contact groups, would be updated on a daily basis in the light of the progress achieved in plenary and contact group meetings.

14. It was agreed that, should contact groups be established, the following clusters of topics should be addressed: (a) foundational document; (b) work programme-related matters; (c) rules of procedure, financial procedures and conflict-of-interest policy; and (d) preparations for the intergovernmental meeting. It was also agreed that efforts would be made to ensure that no more than two such groups would be scheduled to meet at the same time, thereby ensuring that smaller delegations could participate in all the deliberations, and to avoid overlap or duplication of related issues. It was also agreed that the ad hoc open-ended working group would establish additional contact or informal groups as it deemed necessary.

15. The Chair stressed that the United Nations System Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at United Nations system events, would apply to the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, as a United Nations meeting, enabling all participants to take part in the session in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment, guided by the highest ethical and professional standards.

C. Attendance

16. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Governments: [to be completed]
17. Representatives of [--] also attended the session.
18. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, secretariats of other intergovernmental organizations, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and other entities attended: [to be completed]
19. Representatives of the following non-governmental, industry, academic and other entities attended: [to be completed]

IV. Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

20. Introducing the item, the Chair invited regional and political groups to deliver statements expressing general views on the substantive issues to be considered at the current session.

21. The representative speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States stressed the importance of integrating capacity-building in all relevant aspects of the panel's work. He said that the adoption by the panel's secretariat of an approach based on equality and human rights would facilitate the implementation of coordinated training and development programmes in an increasingly interconnected world. An accessible and flexible financial mechanism would ensure the equal participation of all Member States in the development of the panel's work programme, and promoting cooperation among States, through the exchange of knowledge, technologies and experience, should be a priority. The hard work of the regional groups should be recognized and he invited all Member States to continue engaging in constructive dialogue. It was imperative for

decision-making processes related to the protection of human health and the environment against hazardous substances and waste to be grounded in robust, transparent and independent scientific research that was free from conflicts of interest. The group was committed to continuing to build bridges with stakeholders to ensure the successful creation of the science-policy panel.

22. The representative speaking on behalf of the group of African States said that priority should be given to the finalization of the foundational elements of the panel, including capacity-building, which, as a core function of the panel, would benefit developing countries; the finalization of the conflict-of-interest policy document, as it was critical to ensuring that the panel and its subsidiary bodies fulfilled their functions without harmful influences on their work; and the finalization of the panel's rules of procedure, programme of work and financial procedures to allow the panel to begin work immediately. The panel's mandate should facilitate collaboration among scientists and policymakers to enhance the relevance and impact of scientific research, ensure that policies were informed by the best evidence available and bridge the gap between science and policy. To avoid duplication of effort and improve efficiency, the functional bodies should have a clear mandate and a multidisciplinary membership, and the work programme and financial procedures should be independent and aligned with the objectives of the Global Framework on Chemicals. Learning from the experience of existing science-policy bodies would help ensure that the panel was functional and effective. He proposed that the panel should be named the "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent Pollution".

23. The representative speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, noting that Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine aligned themselves with the statement, said that the panel's operating principles should be concise, simple, clear and stand-alone, and should guide all facets of the panel's work. The institutional arrangements should be based on those of IPCC and IPBES. She invited the secretariat to present an overview of the structure of the panel and the connections between the different bodies at the start of contact group meetings to expedite the discussions and avoid misunderstandings. She stressed that the bureau, the interdisciplinary expert committee, the secretariat and the plenary should be assigned clear mandates. As in other scientific advisory bodies, a clear and transparent procedure for addressing all professional, personal and financial conflicts of interest was essential to ensuring the panel's credibility. She expressed strong support for the panel's engagement with all relevant stakeholders, especially WHO, to ensure the transparency of the panel's work, make use of the best available expertise and enhance the relevance and impact of the panel's output. She expressed the hope that substantive progress would be made on the work-related processes and procedures, including the process for determining the work programme and the procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables, given their importance for kick-starting the work of the panel.

24. The representative speaking on behalf of the group of Asia-Pacific States, thanking the secretariat for the documentation provided, said that the operational principles and scope of the panel should be based on the principles set out in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, as unnecessary expansion of those principles could prove counterproductive for the discussions and delay consensus. He emphasized the importance of capacity-building, including the provision of financial resources and technical assistance, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer, to support scientists in developing countries and facilitate cooperation with the panel. The panel and its subsidiary bodies should avoid duplicating efforts with intergovernmental forums, multilateral environmental agreement mechanisms and regional bodies, and should encourage the participation of developing countries. He attached paramount importance to decision-making based on consensus in the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group and the future panel.

25. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland said that the country's participation in the plenary and contact group meetings would be limited owing to restrictions on policymaking activities in the run-up to the general election to be held on 4 July 2024.

26. The observer speaking on behalf of all major groups and stakeholders expressed the hope that the proposal to establish a separate policy committee would be removed from the foundational document to establish the panel, as such a committee could unnecessarily duplicate work, increase delivery times and costs, and weaken the science-policy interface. She requested that members ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in the interdisciplinary expert committee and the panel's work programme. Everyone participating in the panel should undergo the conflict-of-interest procedure, which should be ongoing and transparent, and a committee, rather than the person being assessed, should decide, on the basis of evidence, whether conflicts existed. Both past and current conflicts of interest should be declared.

27. The observer speaking on behalf of the children and youth major group called for intergenerational equity to be included as an operating principle of the panel, as it reflected the United Nations' long-standing recognition of the need to safeguard the quality of life of future generations. She emphasized the importance of meaningful engagement with young people through the establishment of a youth expert advisory group, which would incorporate young people's lived experiences of chemicals, waste and pollution into the panel's work. She recalled the need to adopt a flexible and iterative approach based on human rights, develop a robust conflict-of-interest policy, defend the rights of vulnerable communities and enhance capacity-building and awareness-raising activities.
28. An observer speaking on behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said that the panel's clear commitment to respecting and protecting human rights should be reflected in the operating principles, and a comprehensive policy should be adopted to ensure the disclosure and evaluation of potential conflicts of interest, including past conflicts. Evaluations should be public and independently monitored to ensure transparency and uphold public confidence. Information supplied by States and businesses should be declared confidential only when there was a proven need and information on environmental and health impacts should be subject to full disclosure. The panel and its subsidiary bodies should respect observers' and Indigenous Peoples' right to participate, and a system should be established to prevent and address intimidation of and reprisals against all those involved in the work of the panel. States had an obligation to cooperate internationally to advance all rights, and capacity-building, technology transfer, resource mobilization and the sharing of scientific knowledge were essential to that end.
29. An observer speaking on behalf of the non-governmental organizations major group called for the development of evidence-based policies to raise awareness and address the issue of electronic waste, which posed a rapidly growing threat to the environment.
30. The Chair drew attention to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2, which contained the outcome of the second session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, namely a compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel. The representative of the secretariat introduced document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 and related information documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/3, UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/5 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/7 for further consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group at the current session. The proposals included the foundational elements for the establishment of the panel: (a) scope, objective and functions of the panel; (b) operating principles of the panel; (c) institutional arrangements for the panel; and (d) evaluation of the operational effectiveness and impact of the panel. Four of the functions of the panel had originated from Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, and the ad hoc open-ended working group had agreed on a fifth function, namely capacity-building, at the first session. Two proposals relating to that function were set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 for consideration at the current session.
31. The Chair also drew attention to the addenda to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2, namely documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2Add.1 (draft rules of procedure), UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2Add.2 (draft financial procedures), UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2Add.3/Rev.1 (draft process for determining the work programme, including prioritization) and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2Add.4 (draft procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables). The compilation of proposals set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 contained placeholders for annexes, for which the secretariat, during the intersessional period, had developed draft text set out in documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1–4, as requested by the ad hoc open-ended working group at its second session. In addition, the secretariat had prepared a revised conflict-of-interest disclosure form (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.5) for the conflict-of-interest policy, as well as background information on financial procedures (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/2), background information on work-related processes (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/4), possible modalities of cooperation and complementarities between the panel and WHO (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/5) and a compilation of written submissions on the documentation for the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/7). An overview of the progress to date towards a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution was set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/6.
32. In the ensuing discussion, two observers spoke about the importance of the conflict-of-interest policy. One said that further work on the conflict-of-interest disclosure form was needed. The other expressed the view that conflict-of-interest declarations should cover both current and past engagements, apply to everyone involved in the work of the panel and its subsidiary bodies, and be made publicly available.

33. One observer said that there was a wide gap between the available scientific evidence of the risks posed and harm caused by chemicals and waste and the regulatory responses adopted by States to address them. He said that the gap was due to disinformation tactics by certain industry actors, the intimidation of scientists and inappropriate claims of confidentiality of the information relating to the risks and harm done. The establishment of a science-policy panel was crucial for avoiding a widening of the gap. Scientists needed to be afforded protection from reprisals, and capacity-building and international cooperation were required to enable scientists from developing countries to participate in the work of the panel. He, along with another observer, expressed the view that information relevant to human health and the environment should never be kept confidential. The use of confidential information could also pose a risk to the credibility of the panel.

34. Some observers stressed the importance of ensuring a transparent process and a panel that was guided by the principles of human rights. One emphasized the importance of drawing on sources of knowledge for the panel beyond science, such as Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems and the experiences of communities adversely affected by chemicals, waste and pollution.

35. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to establish a contact group on the foundational document. The contact group was mandated to finalize the draft proposals on the foundational elements of the panel on the basis of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2, including the draft proposal on the scope, objective and functions of the panel, including in relation to the capacity-building function, building on agreed text on the functions and the objective of the panel; to finalize the draft proposal on operating principles, on the basis of the operating principles identified by the ad hoc open-ended working group at its second session, as included in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2, and to agree on which principles were to be included as operating principles of the panel and which principles or approaches could be addressed elsewhere; to finalize the draft proposal on institutional arrangements for the panel, including the relationship between the governing body, the bureau, committees and subsidiary bodies, the financial arrangements of the secretariat and strategic partnerships; to finalize the draft proposal on the evaluation of the operational effectiveness and impact of the panel; and to propose a name for the panel. The co-facilitators of the contact group would be Sofia Tingstorp (Sweden) and Judith Torres (Uruguay). It was agreed that the contact group would hold informal group meetings as necessary to facilitate its discussions with a view to finalizing its work.

36. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to establish a contact group on work programme-related matters. The contact group was mandated to finalize a draft proposal on the process for determining the work programme for the panel on the basis of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.3/Rev.1 and the related information documents; and to develop a draft proposal on the procedures for the panel deliverables on the basis of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4 and the related information documents. The co-facilitators of the contact group would be Kateřina Šebková (Czechia) and Moleboheng Julieta Petlane (Lesotho). It was agreed that the contact group would hold informal group meetings as necessary to facilitate its discussions with a view to finalizing its work.

37. The ad hoc open-ended working group also agreed to establish a contact group on the rules of procedure, financial procedures and conflict of interest. The contact group was mandated to finalize a draft proposal on the rules of procedure on the basis of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1; to develop a draft proposal on financial procedures on the basis of document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.2; and to finalize the draft proposal on the conflict-of-interest policy on the basis of annex 5 in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 and the draft conflict-of-interest disclosure form set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.5. The contact group would be co-facilitated by Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) and Itsuki Kuroda (Japan). It was agreed that the contact group would hold informal group meetings as necessary to facilitate its discussions with a view to finalizing its work.

38. Subsequently, the ad hoc open-ended working group heard interim reports on the work of the three contact groups established under the present agenda item.

39. Reporting on the work of the contact group on the foundational document, Ms. Tingstorp said that the group had discussed the scope, objective and functions of the panel. It had considered the two proposals relating to the capacity-building function in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 and had received a third proposal on the matter. Following informal consultations within the group, the group had agreed on a compromise text that would be used as the basis for its deliberations on capacity-building. The issue of gender required further consideration.

40. The group had also discussed the operating principles of the panel. There had been support for the principles to be formulated in a simple manner, and a proposal had been made for the principles to

be aligned with the wording used in Environment Assembly resolution 5/8. Owing to time constraints, the group had considered only the first four operating principles, which still contained text in square brackets. It had been noted that certain aspects might be of relevance to other documents being discussed at the current session, and several text proposals to provide further clarity and bring together connected concepts had been discussed.

41. With regard to institutional arrangements for the panel, the contact group had come to the common understanding that the panel would be an encompassing entity comprising the governing body or plenary, the bureau, the subsidiary bodies, including the interdisciplinary expert committee, other subsidiary bodies, the secretariat and the groups of experts contributing to the delivery of the work programme. Issues on which views still differed related to the membership of the governing body, and the participation of observers.

42. The co-facilitator said that the contact group on the foundational document therefore required more time to fulfil its mandate.

43. Reporting on the work of the contact group on work programme-related matters, Ms. Šebková said that, in relation to the draft process for determining the work programme, some members of the contact group had been in favour of allowing submissions for the work programme by Governments only, while others had been in favour of also allowing submissions by relevant stakeholders. Some members had proposed additional items for inclusion in the list of information that should accompany a submission, such as existing scientific literature, which had raised concerns among developing countries about their access to such information and their capacity to gather it. The group had also discussed the interrelation of the secretariat, the bureau, and the interdisciplinary expert committee that would deal with prioritization for determining the work programme. There had also been a suggestion that policy relevance should be assessed by a separate entity, such as an “extended bureau”.

44. During a general exchange of views on the draft procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables, the group had realized that some elements might need more time for completion than was available to the ad hoc open-ended working group during its existence. The contact group had also discussed the types of deliverables of the panel and the scoping process. Some members had proposed a detailed list of deliverables, while others had stressed the need to keep the list concise but not closed, referring to it as indicative, as other deliverables might be added over time.

45. The co-facilitator said that the contact group on work programme-related matters required more time to fulfil its mandate.

46. Reporting on the work of the contact group on the rules of procedure, financial procedures and conflict of interest, Ms. Kuroda said the group had made progress on the draft conflict-of-interest policy and disclosure form, but square brackets still remained. With regard to the draft rules of procedure, the group had discussed the text and received high-level guidance on sections or paragraphs that were identified as not overlapping with topics being considered by the contact group on the foundational document. The group had asked the secretariat to prepare an updated version of the text on the basis of those proposals to facilitate further discussions in the group.

47. The co-facilitator said that the contact group on the rules of procedure, financial procedures and conflict of interest required more time to fulfil its mandate.

48. [to be completed]

V. Recommendations to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme for the preparation of the intergovernmental meeting to establish the science-policy panel

49. Introducing the item, the Chair invited regional and political groups to deliver statements expressing general views on the substantive issues to be considered at the current session.

50. The representative speaking on behalf of Na regional group said that it was crucial, by the end of the session, to reach agreement on the necessary arrangements for establishing a science-policy panel that encompassed all aspects of chemicals, waste and pollution, in accordance with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/8. Furthermore, it would be helpful to set a time frame for the first plenary meeting of the panel, taking into account the time needed to prepare for the meeting. Given the relevance of both health and pollution issues to the proposed panel’s work, there was merit in the idea of UNEP and WHO setting up a secretariat to provide joint services for the panel. He invited the Executive Director of UNEP and the Director General of WHO to make arrangements in that regard for consideration at the intergovernmental meeting.

51. Subsequently, the Chair drew attention to documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/3, which contained proposals on the establishment of the panel to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting, and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/4, on proposals to give effect to arrangements to be considered by the intergovernmental meeting.
52. A representative of the secretariat, introducing the two documents, said that the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, had proposed that, upon finalization of the foundational document at the current session, the intergovernmental meeting could be scheduled for February 2025, with the venue and exact dates to be confirmed. The intergovernmental meeting would establish the panel and transmit procedures, policies, guidelines, administrative and financial arrangements and an indicative budget to the governing body of the panel for consideration and possible adoption at its first session. In order to prepare for the intergovernmental meeting, it would be necessary to raise the required funding. On 13 June 2024, the sum of expenditures for the ad hoc open-ended working group process had stood at \$6,153,202, while the sum of cash contributions received from Governments had amounted to \$6,061,578. The sum of direct cash contributions from UNEP had been \$503,103, with the result that cash at hand had totalled \$411,479. With \$61,479 of that having been set aside as a contingency fund to cover the costs of the current session, it was estimated that \$350,000 would be carried over from the process. The ad hoc open-ended working group process was made possible thanks to the voluntary financial contributions of countries, some in-kind contributions, and a direct and indirect support from UNEP.
53. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to the proposed timeline for the intergovernmental meeting and the first session of the governing body of the panel, to be held back to back. It also agreed to convene an informal consultation with the secretariat on the budgetary and financial situation for interested representatives. The consultation would be facilitated by Jinhui Li (China).
54. The ad hoc open-ended working group further agreed to work on the basis of the text suggestions put forward by the secretariat in documents UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/3 and UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/4. Finally, it agreed to establish a contact group on preparations for the intergovernmental meeting. The contact group was mandated to finalize the three draft decisions set out in the two documents and to decide on the placement of any text emanating from the other three contact groups, on the understanding that it would not modify the text. The co-facilitators of the group would be Safiya Sawney (Grenada) and Toks Akinseye (United Kingdom). It was agreed that the contact group would hold informal group meetings as necessary to facilitate its discussions with a view to finalizing its work.
55. Subsequently, reporting on the work of the contact group on preparations for the intergovernmental meeting, Ms. Akinseye said that, in relation to the draft decision on the establishment of the panel in annex I to document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/3, the group had been unable to reach consensus on two options related to the preambular text. It had therefore asked members to try to resolve the matter informally before the next meeting of the contact group.
56. The contact group had agreed that, before considering the draft decision on recommendations to give effect to arrangements in the foundational document, as set out in document UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/4, it would wait for a submission on the provision of secretariat services for the science-policy panel from UNEP and WHO.
57. The contact group on preparations for the intergovernmental meeting would then require more time to fulfil its mandate.
58. Subsequently, the Chair drew attention to a conference room paper on the potential model for the provision of secretariat services for the science-policy panel involving UNEP and WHO.
59. Introducing the joint proposal by UNEP and WHO on the provision of joint secretariat services, as set out in the conference room paper, a representative of WHO said that it had been drafted based on informal discussions and on advice received from WHO and UNEP legal counsel. The rationale for the potential provision of joint secretariat services was the fact that the work of the new panel was relevant to both organizations and that their existing infrastructure and technical expertise could be of substantial benefit to the panel. A representative of UNEP added that, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8, various possible working modalities had been explored.
60. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, said that more time was needed to gain a clearer understanding of the proposal and enable coordination at the national and regional levels before a way forward could be identified. Other representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, voiced support for the

proposal and encouraged its further consideration at the current session, whether in a contact group or other setting, and its subsequent onward transmission to the intergovernmental meeting.

61. Following a proposal by the Chair, the ad hoc open-ended working group agreed that Governments would be given time to reflect on the content of the conference room paper. Representatives could then communicate to their respective Bureau member their views, including on whether the proposal should be considered in a contact group or another setting, to enable the Bureau to agree on the organization of the work.

62. Following a brief discussion, she further proposed that space be made available in an informal, open-ended setting so that delegations could ask UNEP and WHO representatives and legal advisers questions of a legal nature or clarify other relevant issues. She emphasized that the informal setting would not constitute an informal group or meeting.

63. The ad hoc open-ended working group agreed to organize an open-ended informal exchange with UNEP and WHO representatives so that representatives could gain further clarification on and deeper understanding of the proposal set out in the conference room paper.

64. [to be completed]

VI. Other matters

65. [to be completed]

VII. Adoption of the report of the session

66. [to be completed]

VIII. Closure of the session

67. [to be completed]