

Africa Regional Meeting in preparation for the resumed third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG 3.2) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

15 May 2025

10:00 – 13:00 (GMT +3)

Online

Africa Meeting Summary Report

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Africa regional meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Linda Kosgei (Kenya) and Mr. Oumar Cisse (Mali), Bureau members of the OEWG for the Africa region. Ms. Kosgei opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. She noted that Ms. Gudi Alkemade wished to attend the meeting to deliver opening remarks but sends her regrets due to another commitment. Ms. Kosgei provided a brief overview of the objectives of the meeting and noted its importance in preparing for OEWG 3.2. The provisional agenda was adopted without any changes.

Agenda item 2: Update on the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) process and the Intergovernmental Meeting

2. The Secretariat provided an overview of UNEA Resolution 5/8 and presented the roadmap for establishing the panel. OEWG 3.2 (15 to 18 June 2025) is expected to finalize the proposals so that the Intergovernmental Meeting (IM) (19 to 20 June 2025) can establish the panel. The outcome of OEWG 3.1, captured in the *Report of the meeting* (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/5), available in all 6 UN languages since October 2024, forms the basis for OEWG 3.2. The text to be negotiated is annexed to that meeting report and constitutes the working documents for OEWG 3.2.
3. The Secretariat reported on webinars and briefing sessions held since OEWG 3.1, and presented the working documents prepared for OEWG 3.2, noting their availability in all 6 UN languages in early May 2025. She recalled the briefing session on the *scenario note* (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/8) held for National Focal Points on 25 March 2025. Regarding the *draft financial procedures* (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/9), she noted that since OEWG had not yet considered this document it was agreed to be forwarded to OEWG 3.2 as an information document and is not expected to be discussed at OEWG 3.2.
4. She highlighted the opportunity to submit written comments on the working documents for the meeting to spp-cwp@un.org by 16 May 2025. Governments are invited to submit through their national focal points, and non-government stakeholders are invited to submit on behalf of their organization or group. All submissions will be uploaded online and will form the basis of an information document by the Secretariat for consideration at OEWG 3.2 (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/INF/10).
5. During the discussion, participants raised several issues, including the lack of French interpretation for the meeting. It was noted that such services should be requested in advance. The status of the Secretariat and the potential involvement of the World Health Organization (WHO) were also discussed, with participants emphasizing the need for a strategic approach to WHO's role. Finally, regarding the name of the panel, the Secretariat informed participants that a proposal document has been circulated and is open for comment until 20 May 2025.

Agenda item 3: Organizational matters for the resumed third session of OEWG (OEWG 3.2)

6. The Secretariat presented the OEWG 3.2 *Provisional agenda* (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1/Rev.1) and *Annotated provisional agenda* (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/1/Add.2).
7. She outlined the modality of work at OEWG 3.2:
 - contact groups are open to participation by all governments and stakeholders, unless otherwise decided by the Chair or the co-facilitators of contact groups;
 - contact group meetings may be held in parallel, while avoiding, to the extent possible, parallel meetings on closely related issues, and efforts will be made so that no more than two contact or informal group meetings are scheduled at the same time;
 - contact groups and informal groups will be provided with a clear and concise mandate;
 - contact groups and other informal groups will work in English, and, accordingly, documents and non-papers considered at their meetings will be in English only; and
 - contact groups will continue to build on previously agreed text, including UNEA resolution 5/8 and previous sessions of the OEWG.

Providing an overview of the tentative schedule for OEWG 3.2, she underscored that most of the first three days of the meeting will be dedicated to contact group work.

8. In closing, the Secretariat confirmed the expected outcomes of OEWG 3.2:
 - the draft decision on the establishment of the panel, including a proposal for the name of the panel and the foundational elements, as set out in the foundation document contained in the annex to the draft decision;
 - the draft decision recommending the consideration and adoption of the rules of procedure by the governing body of the panel at its first session, and the forwarding for further consideration and finalization at this session of the draft procedures and policies in their present form as set out in annexes 2–4 to the draft decision; and
 - the draft decision on arrangements for the interim period that are required for the operation of the panel, including the preparation of the first session of the governing body of the panel.
9. Participants emphasized the need for strategic planning of the contact groups, given the limited time at OEWG 3.2. They stressed that the groups must be well prepared to ensure timely completion of the OEWG's work. The Secretariat confirmed it is working closely with the Bureau and co-facilitators to develop an efficient strategy.

Agenda item 4: Preparation of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

10. The Secretariat said that the OEWG 3.2 will prioritize finalizing:
 - The draft decision on the establishment of the panel, including a proposal for the name of the panel and the foundational elements, as set out in the foundational document contained in the annex to the draft decision (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/6), and
 - The draft decision recommending the consideration and adoption of the rules of procedure by the governing body of the panel at its first session, and the forwarding for further consideration and finalization at this session of the draft procedures and policies in their present form as set out in annexes 2–4 to the draft decision (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/7).
11. The secretariat then presented the proposed clustering of key topics for contact groups:
 - Cluster 1: Membership and functions of the bodies of the panel, decision-making, and related rules of procedure
 - Cluster 2: Other foundational elements and related rules of procedure, and the draft decision to establish the panel
 - Cluster 3: Other rules of procedure, the draft decision to forward the draft rules, procedures and policies, and the draft decision for the interim period.

12. On the draft rules of procedure, the Secretariat provided an overview of the document which included, highlighted in yellow, those elements of the document that had not been considered at OEWG 3.1 due to their connection with the foundational document. She explained that the proposed clustering will allow for related elements of the foundational document and the draft rules of procedure to be considered together.
13. Participants emphasized the need to ensure that the foundational document and rules of procedure (RoP) are finalized during OEWG 3.2. It was clarified that some procedures will be forwarded in their current form to be finalized by the panel itself. The Co-Chairs encouraged participants to report on regional discussions and consider further consultations in preparation for OEWG 3.2.

Agenda item 5: Recommendations to the Executive Director of UNEP for the preparation of the intergovernmental meeting to establish the science-policy panel

14. The Secretariat recalled that the OEWG is invited to make recommendations to the Executive Director of UNEP on preparing the intergovernmental meeting (IM). The Secretariat referred to the draft decision on arrangements for the interim period (UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/8), which would enable the panel to begin its work, including the provision of interim secretariat services to facilitate the first session of the governing body of the panel. She added that items under agenda item 4 will also be forwarded to the IM.
15. With no questions raised, Ms. Kosgei closed the agenda item.

Agenda item 6: Logistical preparations for the OEWG 3.2 and Intergovernmental Meeting

16. The Secretariat outlined the logistical arrangements for OEWG 3.2, which will take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, Convention and Exhibition Centre, from 15 to 18 June 2025, with preceding regional, stakeholder and informal meetings on 14 June 2025. The Intergovernmental Meeting (IM) will be held back-to-back with OEWG 3.2 at the same venue from 19 to 20 June 2025.
17. Participants were reminded of the importance of timely travel arrangements, visa requirements and credentials. The Secretariat noted that coordination with the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat is ongoing, and communication with participants will continue into early June 2025.
18. Follow-up actions included direct outreach to countries that have not registered and ensuring communication and logistics are in place. It was proposed that a list of countries yet to register be shared for targeted follow-up by Africa region Bureau members.

Agenda item 7: Other matters

19. No other matters were raised under this agenda item.

Agenda item 8: Closure of the meeting

20. In closing, Ms. Kosgei encouraged participants to continue engaging on key issues the region must address ahead of the 14 June 2025 meeting. She noted that an additional closed regional meeting will be organized, with the date and time to be communicated in due course. She thanked participants and the Secretariat for their commitment and expressed hope for a successful outcome. The meeting was closed by Ms. Kosgei on 15 May 2025 at 12:56 Nairobi time (GMT+3).