



**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on
Chemicals, Waste and Pollution
First session
Geneva, 2–6 February 2026**

Draft report of the first part of the first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution

Introduction

1. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was established by decision IM/1 of the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on 20 June 2025. The foundational document, set out in the annex to that decision, provides that the Plenary is the governing and decision-making body of the Panel.
2. The first part of the first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was held at the International Conference Centre in Geneva from 2 to 6 February 2026.

I. Opening of the session

3. The session was opened at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 2 February 2026 by Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The opening of the session was preceded by a Swiss cultural musical performance.
4. At the 1st meeting of the session, opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Andersen and Katrin Schneeberger, Director of the Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland.
5. Ms. Andersen, welcoming participants to the first session of the Plenary of the Panel, said that the decision to establish the Panel by the intergovernmental meeting represented a historic step towards closing a glaring science-policy gap. In adopting that decision, States had chosen to support multilateralism, science and global cooperation; to bring clarity, coherence and authority to the chemicals, waste and pollution prevention agenda; and to strengthen action on issues that were seriously affecting human, ecosystem and economic health. The Panel would be built on dialogue, compromise and collaboration; on inclusive participation across regions, sectors and knowledge systems, including Indigenous knowledge; and on working together to provide policy-relevant science and actionable solutions and strengthen the abilities of all States to tackle chemicals, waste and pollution.
6. In her remarks, Ms. Schneeberger said that the establishment of the Panel just three years after the adoption by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the resolution to launch negotiations for a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution was a remarkable achievement and a clear demonstration of efficient multilateralism. Such multilateralism was now under pressure, however, and resources were scarce. For the Panel's success story to continue, it was critical to strengthen collaboration, including with universities and scientific networks that could provide expertise and

in-kind resources and with relevant international organizations that could create synergies, improve efficiency and reduce costs. It was also vital to maintain an inclusive approach so that scientists worldwide could contribute to the Panel's work and members could participate in its Plenary sessions. The Panel's secretariat must be financially well resourced and well connected; it must operate at the intersection between chemicals and waste governance and science-policy cooperation. For that reason, the Government of Switzerland was offering to host the secretariat in Geneva. The city had the necessary conditions: it was the location for various international instruments and organizations working to advance chemicals and waste governance, such as the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch, and was home to a large number of permanent missions of States Members of the United Nations. With its offer to host the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution secretariat, her country remained firmly committed to supporting the work of the Panel, including through capacity-building so as to ensure universal participation.

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda

7. The sub-item was not considered.

B. Organization of work

8. At the 1st meeting of the session, in the morning of Monday, 2 February, introducing the sub-item, Ms. Andersen recalled that the intergovernmental meeting had recommended the draft rules of procedure to the Plenary for consideration and possible adoption at its first session. In accordance with established practice, she proposed that the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of the Plenary's first session only, pending the adoption of the Plenary's rules of procedure.

9. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for the application of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly to the work of the Plenary pending the finalization, as a matter of priority, of the draft rules of procedure for the Plenary, in line with decision IM/2 on recommendations for consideration by the Plenary at its first session. Many others objected, however, saying that the rules of procedure of the Plenary should be finalized and adopted as a matter of utmost priority before the Plenary began its work in order to provide a clear framework for its deliberations.

10. Responding to a proposal that had been supported by several representatives, to apply the draft rules of procedure of the Plenary on a provisional basis for the election of officers, Ms. Andersen suggested that the provisions on decision-making in section 11, namely rules 35 and 36 of the draft rules of procedure, be applied provisionally for the purpose of electing the officers only, until such time as the Plenary adopted its own rules of procedure, to enable the Plenary to elect the Chair and Vice-Chairs by acclamation for the duration of the current session and then proceed to the discussion on the draft rules of procedure for finalization under the guidance of the Chair rather than the secretariat. Several representatives expressed objections, noting that the draft rules of procedure should be applied as a whole. One representative pointed out that rules 18–20 of the draft rules of procedure, pertaining to the election of Bureau members, were bracketed and therefore not applicable.

11. Noting that the suggestion she had made had not been met with the full agreement of the Plenary, Ms. Andersen proposed applying the draft rules of procedure of the Plenary on a provisional basis in order to enable the election of the Chair to take place and for the Plenary to consider the finalization of the draft rules of procedure under the leadership of the elected Chair. While several representatives supported that proposal, others objected, pointing out that a large number of rules were bracketed.

12. One representative, supported by several others, proposed provisionally applying rules 35, 36 and 49 of the draft rules of procedure and also applying the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly only for the current session. In the event that the Environment Assembly rules of procedure were incompatible with rules 35, 36 and 49 of the draft rules of procedure, the latter rules would take precedence.

13. Following informal consultations, the Plenary agreed to apply paragraph 1 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly for the purpose of electing the Chair, on the understanding that the Chair, immediately upon election, would convene a contact group to finalize

the draft rules of procedure, and convene a meeting of the Plenary in the morning of Wednesday, 4 February, for consideration and possible provisional approval of those rules that had been agreed such that they might guide the work of the Plenary. The Plenary agreed to establish a contact group to finalize the draft rules of procedure set out in document UNEP/ISP-CWP.1/3. The draft rules of procedure agreed by the contact group would be transmitted to the Plenary for its consideration in the morning of Wednesday, 4 February.

14. At the 2nd meeting of the session, in the morning of Wednesday, 4 February, reporting on the work of the contact group on the rules of procedure, the Chair said that, during a first reading of the document, the group had identified several paragraphs that required alignment with the foundational document and had requested the secretariat to prepare a revised document on that basis. The group had continued its work based on the revised document but had not yet completed its work. The Chair therefore proposed that the contact group resume its work immediately following the current meeting with a view to presenting a complete set of draft rules of procedure for consideration by the Plenary on the following day.

15. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the Chair for his leadership towards finalizing the draft rules of procedure. Many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of countries, highlighted the urgent need to accelerate progress by adjusting the current working modalities, addressing challenges and identifying areas of convergence. They stressed the importance of intensifying efforts, not only to enable the adoption of the draft rules of procedure, but also decision-making on other priority areas for the Plenary at its first session, such as the physical location of the Panel's secretariat, the election of officers and intersessional work.

16. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the officers of the Bureau should be elected as a priority to help guide the work of the session. That proposal was supported by several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, who advocated proceeding to the election of officers by acclamation to enable those officers to provide support to the Chair in guiding the work of the Plenary.

17. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that a set of minimum rules should be extracted from the rules of procedure to enable the operationalization of the Panel, including the election of the Bureau and agreement on intersessional work. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called on all members to consider any potential proposals and alignments with the foundational document, and to avoid prolonging discussions given the urgent need to bring the session to a successful conclusion and adopt the rules of procedure. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, also highlighted the need to take into account the constraints faced by small delegations.

18. The Chair expressed the view that, at a minimum, the Plenary should achieve five main objectives by the end of the first session: adoption of the rules of procedure; election of the officers of the Bureau; a decision on the physical location of the Panel secretariat; establishment of a trust fund; and a decision on the dates of the following session of the Plenary. He suggested that a new modality for negotiations on the rules of procedure was required and would be proposed during the next meeting of the contact group. With regard to the election of officers, he pointed to the lack of applicable rules of procedure for the election of the Bureau, suggesting that the election take place once the regional groups had indicated their readiness to elect Bureau members by acclamation.

19. Following the remarks by the Chair, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, stressed that the input of the regional groups through their Bureau members to assist the Chair with his mandate was paramount. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the rule that had enabled the Chair's election by acclamation could also be applied to the election of the other officers by acclamation.

20. Some representatives emphasized the need to define the term of office of the Bureau. In the ensuing discussion, one representative suggested that the Plenary could decide by consensus on the term of office of the Bureau and to elect officers by acclamation. Another representative noted that the election of officers from regional groups that were not yet ready to proceed to the election could take place after the adoption of the rules of procedure.

21. The Legal Officer addressed two questions posed during the discussion. In response to one question, he confirmed that the Plenary could elect its Bureau and delegate the power to the Bureau, on the basis of paragraph 12 of the foundational document, to conduct the work at the current session. Responding to another question regarding which financial rules would need to be adopted in order to enable a more regularized financial situation, he explained that, in the absence of financial procedures

for the Panel, the rules and regulations of UNEP and the United Nations would apply, and would enable the trust fund to be established and to receive income and incur expenditures.

22. In line with a proposal by the Chair, the Plenary agreed to apply paragraph 1 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly for the purpose of electing the Vice-Chairs for the regional groups where the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled, including the designation of a rapporteur, for a term of office of two years, on the understanding that such term of office would be revised, if needed, in accordance with the final term of office agreed in the rules of procedure and that the same term of office would be applied to the Chair.

23. The Plenary also agreed that the contact group would continue with its mandate to finalize the draft rules of procedure, and that the Chair would report to the Plenary on the outcome of the group's work in the morning of Thursday, 5 February.

24. A representative of an observer made a statement welcoming the establishment of the Panel while stressing that the decisions taken at its first session would determine whether it would become a credible, preventive and rights-respecting body or allow pollution and harm to continue unchecked. She urged the Plenary, in considering its rules of procedure, policies, work programme and financial arrangements, to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples across all deliverables and modalities. She also called for dedicated seats on the interdisciplinary expert committee for Indigenous scientists and knowledge-holders selected through Indigenous Peoples' representative processes, as well as the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples advisory committee with a clear mandate to advise the Plenary, Bureau, secretariat and subsidiary bodies.

25. At the 3rd meeting of the session, in the morning of Thursday, 5 February, the Chair reported on the work of the contact group on the rules of procedure, explaining that an informal group had been established to focus on certain provisions identified as being of greatest importance, leaving the contact group to continue working on the remaining draft rules. Following the report back on the work of the informal group to the contact group, a number of draft rules that had been agreed ad referendum by the contact group were incorporated into the draft rules of procedure. As various other draft rules remained to be finalized, the Chair proposed that the contact group resume its work and report back to the Plenary on the following day.

26. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, commended the Chair for his efforts to finalize the draft rules of procedure. A number of representatives welcomed the fact that consensus had been achieved on some draft rules and expressed optimism that further progress could be made. Other representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, voiced frustration at the slow rate of progress and the lack of action on other priority matters.

27. One representative said that the draft rules agreed ad referendum largely contained standardized text or had already been defined in the foundational document and that the lack of progress under the current mode of work meant that the working modalities should be adjusted to facilitate the Plenary's decision-making on other substantive issues. He proposed a motion that the Plenary should decide, on an extraordinary basis and exclusively for its first session, that the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly be provisionally applied, *mutatis mutandis*, until either the Plenary's first session was concluded or the draft rules of procedure of the Panel were adopted, whichever came first. He requested that the motion be submitted for the consideration of the Plenary; should objections be raised, the motion should be submitted to a vote, in accordance with the authority vested in the Chair under rule 36 of the draft rules of procedure of the Plenary, which, he recalled, had been agreed, alongside rules 35 and 49 and the foundational document, at the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel.

28. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, voiced support for that proposal. Among other elements, some noted that the time remaining was limited; that, under the current working modalities, the Plenary was unlikely to complete its main objectives for the session; and that the application of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly was the most pragmatic way to facilitate the Plenary's decision-making and achieve the goal of operationalizing the Panel.

29. Many other representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, objected to the proposal, citing the fact that the Plenary had already discussed – and decided against – applying the full set of rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly. They recalled that the Plenary had agreed, by consensus and in accordance with paragraph 1 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, to elect a Chair with a mandate to finalize the draft rules of procedure of the Panel. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that backtracking on that

decision would not be constructive. Some representatives warned that applying other procedural modalities at the current juncture would be inconsistent with the principles set out in the foundational document. They expressed concern that doing so could undermine trust in the process, put at risk its sustainability and inclusiveness, and jeopardize the Panel's legitimacy and credibility.

30. Some representatives considered that the proposal was a substantive – not a procedural – matter. They and several other representatives questioned whether the proposal was legally sound. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, queried whether the Chair had a mandate to call a vote. Another representative stressed that holding a vote risked setting a precedent that might derail future work. Some other representatives noted that the Plenary had yet to adopt any rules on which basis a vote could be conducted. One representative pointed out that a proposal to apply rule 36, along with rules 35 and 49, had already been rejected by the Plenary at the 1st meeting of the session. If the Plenary was now willing to apply those rules, perhaps it might consider provisionally adopting or applying those draft rules agreed ad referendum.

31. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, making a separate proposal for the Plenary's consideration, said that the approach taken so far by the Chair had contributed positively to progress on the draft rules of procedure. To capitalize on that momentum, he proposed that the mandate of the Chair be extended until the end of the day, at which time the Plenary could provisionally adopt those draft rules that had been agreed ad referendum. Any provisions that remained bracketed could be transmitted for consideration by the Plenary at its future sessions. That proposal was supported by many representatives, who highlighted, among other things, that work was progressing effectively, as demonstrated by the various draft rules agreed ad referendum; that consensus-based decision-making was of paramount importance; and that the focus should be on completing the work already begun.

32. Some representatives voiced concern that the second proposal risked prejudging the level of progress that could be made in the time remaining. They considered that the partial adoption of the draft rules of procedure might cause issues in the future. The second reading of all the draft rules should be completed; the Plenary could then decide on the next steps to be taken.

33. The representative who had made the first proposal, referring to the legal basis for his motion, drew attention to the report of the intergovernmental meeting (document UNEP/SPP-CWP/IM/5, paras. 42 and 47), in which it was stated that rules 35, 36 and 49 of the draft rules of procedure of the Plenary had been agreed. He clarified that his motion was a procedural matter based on rule 36, which set out the procedure for matters to be submitted to a vote in the absence of consensus. As there was clearly no consensus on his motion, a vote should be taken.

34. Following the discussion, the Chair ruled that the Plenary should proceed to consider the motion (referred to in para. 27 above) for the Plenary to decide, on an extraordinary basis and for the exclusive purpose of its first session, to provisionally apply the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, *mutatis mutandis*, until such time as the Plenary had concluded its first session or had adopted the rules of procedure of the Plenary, whichever came first.

35. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, rejected the Chair's ruling. They said that, by taking such a decision, the Chair was exceeding his mandate to guide the discussions with a view to adopting the draft rules of procedure, and was undermining the work that had been completed. Responding to a question from one representative, the Chair said that, in addition to his mandate to guide the work on the draft rules of procedure, his role was to conduct the business of the Plenary.

36. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed the view that, in accordance with the draft rules of procedure and established United Nations practice, the Chair could only determine whether a matter was procedural or substantive and did not have the authority to decide on the way forward without consensus. Several stressed that the Plenary was the body vested with decision-making authority, that all delegations wishing to speak should be given the floor, and that States had the sovereign right to propose motions for consideration by the decision-making body. Representatives expressed concern that adopting or applying draft rules without consensus could set a problematic precedent and undermine the principle of consensus. A number of representatives called for the suspension of the discussion pending legal clarification, while noting that the right to propose motions did not imply their automatic acceptance.

37. Responding to requests for clarification of the Chair's powers in the absence of formally adopted rules of procedure, the Legal Officer said that the Chair could, as a matter of inherent procedural authority and consistent with established practice in intergovernmental processes, conduct the proceedings by drawing upon the generally accepted rules, principles and customary practices of

comparable intergovernmental bodies, including at United Nations meetings. In intergovernmental meetings, the Chair had the power to open and close the meeting, direct discussions, ensure observance of the rules, recognize speakers, put questions to a vote, announce decisions and rule on points of order. Subject to the authority of the Plenary, the Chair controlled the proceedings and maintained order, and could propose procedural measures, including limits on speaking time, the closure of speakers' lists or debates and the suspension or adjournment of meetings or discussions.

38. At the 4th meeting of the session, in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 February, on a proposal from the Chair, the Plenary agreed that the meeting would adjourn immediately and that the contact group on the rules of procedure would continue its work and thereafter report back to the Plenary. The Plenary also agreed that the Chair would hold consultations on the way forward with a smaller group of delegations, during which time Gudi Alkemade (Kingdom of the Netherlands) would facilitate the contact group discussions on his behalf.

39. At the 5th meeting of the session, in the afternoon of Friday, 6 February, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed her objection to the use of unacceptable language in reference to the representative of a country in her group. Another representative said that any instances of discrimination or harassment should be addressed to ensure a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment.

40. Reporting on the work of the contact group on the rules of procedure, the facilitator said that constructive discussions and a collective effort by the group had resulted in progress being achieved on several of the draft rules. Differences of opinion remained, however, with regard to a number of provisions, such as on the frequency and modality of sessions of the Plenary and subsidiary bodies. The group had therefore been unable to complete its task. She introduced a conference room paper setting out the revised draft rules of procedure for consideration by the Plenary.

41. Following a proposal by the Chair, the Plenary agreed that work would continue, at a later date, on the basis of the revised draft rules of procedure as set out in the conference room paper. Responding to questions and comments by some representatives, a representative of the secretariat explained that, since the Plenary had yet to consider the matter of the provisional agenda, dates and venue of the next session, it was not yet known when work on the draft rules would be resumed.

42. Regarding the motion that had been submitted by a representative at the 3rd meeting of the session (see para. 27 above), the Chair reported that, despite two rounds of informal consultations, agreement on a way forward remained elusive.

43. Following further informal consultations, the representative who had submitted the motion reported that no consensus had been reached on the rules of procedure to be applied to the remainder of the session. He requested additional time to continue the consultations.

44. Following a proposal by the Chair in the light of that request, the Plenary agreed to suspend the meeting. Upon the resumption of the meeting, the representative who had submitted the motion reported that the representatives involved in the informal consultations had been unable to reach agreement. His delegation was open to engaging in further discussion.

45. Following a further proposal by the Chair, the Plenary agreed to allow additional time for the informal consultations to continue and, in parallel, to convene a contact group to consider the establishment of a trust fund and the dates and venue of the next session of the Plenary, and to appoint María del Mar Solano Trejos (Costa Rica) and Přemysl Štěpánek (Czechia) as co-facilitators of the contact group.

46. At the 6th meeting of the session, in the evening of Friday, 6 February, the Plenary heard reports from the co-facilitators of the contact group considering the establishment of a trust fund and the dates and venue of the next session of the Plenary.

47. The co-facilitators of the contact group said that the group had made progress on a paragraph on the establishment of the trust fund but had not agreed on other elements of a possible draft decision on the matter. The contact group had also briefly discussed the next session of the Plenary. Owing to time constraints, no conclusion had been reached on that matter.

48. Following the reports from the co-facilitators of the contact group, the Chair proposed that a decision be taken by the Plenary on the establishment of the trust fund by adopting a decision composed only of the related paragraph that had been agreed to ad referendum in the contact group. A number of representatives objected to the proposal, citing a lack of clarity and transparency on the trust fund modalities, including on reporting and earmarked contributions.

C. Status of the membership of the Panel

49. The sub-item was not considered.

D. Election of officers

50. At the 1st meeting of the session, in accordance with paragraph 1 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, the Plenary elected by acclamation Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez-Pérez (Chile) as its Chair for the duration of the first session.

51. At the 2nd meeting of the session, in accordance with paragraph 1 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, the Plenary elected by acclamation the following representatives as Vice-Chairs of the Panel from the African States, Asia-Pacific States, Latin American and Caribbean States and Western European and other States for a term of office of two years, on the understanding that such term of office would be revised, if needed, in accordance with the term of office agreed in the rules of procedure:

Vice-Chairs: Bart Rymen (Belgium)
 Chen Haijun (China)
 Jean Marie Bope Bope Lapwong (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
 Linda Kosgei (Kenya)
 José Isabel López Arroyo (Mexico)
 Amal Refat Albawardi (Saudi Arabia)
 Helena Richards (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

52. The Plenary decided that the term of office of two years would also apply to the Chair, on the understanding that it would be revised, as appropriate, in accordance with the term of office agreed in the rules of procedure.

53. The Plenary designated Ms. Richards of the United Kingdom as Rapporteur for a duration of two years.

54. The election of the Vice-Chairs from the Eastern European States was postponed.

III. Other items**A. Credentials of representatives****B. Report on activities of the interim secretariat****C. Operational arrangements for the Panel**

1. Consideration of the physical location of the Panel secretariat
2. Rules, procedures and policies transmitted by the intergovernmental meeting to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution to the Plenary at its first session
3. Consideration of intersessional work

D. Financial and budgetary arrangements for the Panel**E. Provisional agenda, dates and venue of the next session of the Plenary**

55. The sub-items were not considered.

IV. Adoption of decisions and the report of the session

56. At the 6th meeting of the session, on Friday, 6 February, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the session that had been circulated.

57. In response to a query from one representative, the Chair proposed that the session be adjourned and resumed at a later date and that all the documents for the Plenary's consideration at the session, including the draft report, be forwarded for consideration by the Plenary at the resumed first session.

58. Responding to a query from another representative, the Legal Officer explained that, in the absence of a decision by the Plenary on the dates and venue of the resumed first session, the Bureau could determine such dates and venue and propose them to the members of the Plenary.

59. Following the ensuing discussion, the Plenary agreed to the Chair's proposal to adjourn and resume the session at a later date, and that all the documents be forwarded for consideration by the Plenary at the resumed first session. The Plenary requested the Bureau, in consultation with the members, to determine the dates and venue of the resumed first session of the Plenary.

60. The representative of Kenya expressed his country's interest in holding the resumed first session of the Plenary in Nairobi, possibly during 2026.

61. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the finalization and adoption of the rules of procedure was essential to ensuring the success of the Panel, and should remain the priority at the resumed first session of the Plenary.

V. Any other matters

62. No other matters were discussed.

VI. Closure of the session

63. The session was adjourned at 8.45 p.m. on Friday, 6 February 2026, to be resumed at a later date.
