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Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals –
For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste
Thursday, 5 March 2026, 14:00 – 16:30 (CET, Geneva time) (ONLINE)
Ninth meeting

DRAFT REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE BUREAU

1. Opening and welcome

1. The President of the Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), Ms. Aisha Humera welcomed the Bureau members to the ninth meeting of the Bureau and expressed deep appreciation for their continued commitment to advancing the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste, emphasizing the importance of collaborative leadership.

2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The President introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting (GFC/IC.1/Bureau.9/1) that was circulated on 18 February 2026. The Bureau members were invited to raise any additional points under agenda item 11, any other business (AOB).

3. Andrea Rother wanted to discuss cooperation between the Special Programme and Global Framework on Chemicals secretariats, which the secretariat explained would be addressed under agenda item 9.

4. With no further items raised, the provisional agenda was adopted.

3. Adoption of the report of the 8th meeting of the Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals

5. The President invited comments on the draft report of the eighth meeting of the Bureau held on 28 October 2025, which was circulated by the secretariat on 1st December 2025.

6. The secretariat informed the Bureau that no comments were received following the report's circulation. With no additional comments, the report was adopted and will be posted on the GFC's website.

4. Update from the secretariat on ICCM5 resolutions

7. The President invited the secretariat to take the floor. The secretariat referred to a newsletter shared two weeks earlier, that summarized progress on ICCM5 resolutions. The update covered: measurability and indicators, issues of concern, the GFC Fund, implementation arrangements, and ongoing follow-up actions.

8. The President opened the floor for questions.

9. Thomas Sverre raised a concern shared by his constituency on the tendency to overload draft resolutions with lengthy preambular text. He urged the secretariat and Bureau to keep resolutions focused, concise, and limited to essential language to facilitate negotiations at the upcoming International Conference.

10. Sara Brosché noted increasing inquiries from stakeholders regarding updates on issues of concern, development of workplans, opportunities for engagement, and clarity on processes and timelines. She requested more structured communication so stakeholders know how and when they can contribute.

11. Bob Diderich confirmed that a webinar on 19 March organized by IOMC will present draft workplans for the existing Issues of Concern. These will be initial proposals based on outcomes from the open-ended working group. Feedback will be solicited, including additional activities proposed by non-IOMC organizations. A later session with the informal reflection group will refine the workplans before submission to the International Conference.

12. Magdalena Frydrych echoed Ms. Brosché's concerns, noting that many stakeholders feel under-informed about timelines, procedures and engagement opportunities on Issues of Concern. She requested a clear timeline, regular updates and materials that Bureau members can share with their constituencies.

5. Progress on measurability including tracking progress against targets

13. The President introduced agenda item 5 and invited the secretariat to take the floor. The secretariat provided a detailed update on the work on the intersessional open-ended ad hoc group on measurability and indicators.

14. Amongst key developments, the secretariat explained that the group had held seven virtual meetings since 2023. A hybrid expert meeting on 19 and 20 February reached agreement on 58 core indicators and 14 supplementary indicators. Currently, not all indicators have custodians or validated fact sheets; work is ongoing to fill these gaps.

15. On data collection for tracking progress, the secretariat indicated that three data sources will be used: existing IOMC indicators, a global stakeholder survey (to

be launched the following week), and secretariat-led data mining of publicly available information. The goal is to present an initial assessment of progress at the International Conference.

16. The President invited Bureau members to take the floor. Thomas Sverre requested early sharing of consolidated outcomes from the expert meeting, and sufficient time for constituencies to review and prepare positions before the ad hoc group meets.

17. The secretariat responded that indicator proposals are currently being cleaned and consolidated, and a revised suite will be presented at the 31 March meeting. A potential 9th intersessional meeting may be scheduled to finalize recommendations, whereas broader stakeholder outreach will occur between the 8th and 9th meetings.

18. Koki Takaki reaffirmed strong regional interest in indicator development and committed to encouraging Asia-Pacific Group members to participate in the 31 March meeting.

6. Preparations for the GFC International Conference in 2026

19. The President presented agenda item 6. The secretariat explained that the International Conference will take place from 16 to 20 November 2026 and will revolve around three overarching themes: Tracking Progress, Accelerating Action and Investing for Impact. These themes will guide plenary discussions, contact groups, side events, and high-level dialogues.

20. On the expected outcomes, for Tracking Progress an initial baseline assessment of global progress towards meeting the 5 strategic objectives and 28 targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals will be presented and recommendations for a suite of indicators from the Open-ended ad hoc working group on Indicators and Measurability will be adopted.

21. For Accelerating Action, gaps will be identified and outstanding actions requiring accelerated action determined. Global Implementation Programmes for strengthening legislation and economic and industry sectors will be adopted along with Terms of Reference and Workplans. Existing Issues of Concern to be carried forward as part of future work for the Global Framework on Chemicals will be agreed; the Gender Action Plan will be adopted and a report on the progress if the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides will be presented.

22. For Investing for Impact, focal point guidelines and a capacity building strategy will be adopted. Financial mechanisms, strengthening national focal point systems, enhancing international cooperation will be considered, and the need to mobilizing resources for implementation and the programme of work and budget for secretariat will be decided.

23. The secretariat shared a timeline for 2026 and preparatory activities towards the International Conference. Key milestones include: the GFC Fund and the Special Program Fund Executive Board meetings at the end of March, the Measurability and Indicators open-ended ad hoc group meeting on 31 March, focal point strengthening

activities including a face to face at the end of April 2026, and International Conference information webinars in May, September and October. Regional meetings will be held immediately before the conference, and where possible joint events with GFC Fund and Special Program inception workshops are being considered.

24. The secretariat presented a provisional list of working documents, information documents, expected resolutions and contact group assignments. Echoing Mr. Sverre's earlier concerns about the heavy workload, several Bureau members agreed on the need for prioritization.

25. The secretariat outlined a draft schedule for the International Conference, with plenary sessions on Monday and Tuesday, contact groups in the evenings, a High-level segment and reception on Wednesday, with the finalization of decisions on Friday 20 November. Additional elements would be a Global Forum on fashion and construction (funded by the Global Environment Facility), and a Health and Plastics Forum organised by the Food Packaging Forum Foundation. In addition, both Youth and Labour constituencies will hold specific events for their communities.

26. The secretariat then reported on fund raising through partnership, noting that the conference depends entirely on voluntary contributions and still faces a significant funding gap. All stakeholder groups are invited to partner for the International Conference contributing of at least USD 25,000 for a dedicated exhibition space, and visibility at the Conference through logos and acknowledgements. The secretariat emphasized that contributions do not imply UNEP endorsement and that all partnerships follow strict policies and transparent cost-recovery practices.

27. Following the presentation, a few Bureau members, in particular Sara Brosché, Thomas Sverre and Andrea Rother cautioned that the agenda may be too ambitious to complete in one week and that there may not be sufficient time for negotiations. Bureau members further indicated that the International Conference overlaps with the UNFCCC COP session (10–20 November), raising concerns about reduced participation from developing countries and competing demands on negotiators.

28. With regards to holding a High-level segment, the Bureau held mixed views with some strongly in favour as a political mobilisation tool whilst others less enthusiastic fearing it would reduce the time for negotiations. The secretariat highlighted that the conflict in dates with climate change could provide an opportunity for a more diverse sectoral presence particularly from health and labour communities. On the Global forums and side events, Ivo de Zwaan and Bob Diderich, requested clearer guidance on their format and attendance criteria to allow for communication and planning.

29. The secretariat indicated that they foresaw a maximum of three contact groups with only two running concurrently. Whilst the draft agenda looked initially very loaded a number of items would be for information or, hopefully, adoption in plenary. On the nomination process for new Issues of Concern, none had been

received to date although there were indications to expect two new Issues of Concern for consideration at the Conference.

30. Finally, the President enquired whether a private sector participant could be accredited for the conference. The secretariat clarified that governments, NGOs, non-profit industry associations and private sector entities may nominate a list of delegates for credentials. The secretariat will review all nominations and approve, when applicable. Further details on the procedure will be provided on the registration form. The secretariat further explained that hybrid participation is possible and that a scenario note will be issued in the coming months.

7. Update on the GFC Fund

31. The President then invited the secretariat to introduce this item.

32. The secretariat presented a detailed update and key statistics on the second round of applications to the GFC Fund. A total of 137 eligible concept notes (70% of the submissions) was received from 75 countries in addition to Palestine. This reflects the wide outreach of the funding call. The total funding requested was for USD 83 million, whereas available funding is USD 25.6 million revealing a large funding gap. The median request for funding was USD 650,000 and the average co-financing contribution around 33%. There was a strong demand for national coordination mechanisms, capacity-building and sectoral implementation projects.

33. The Executive Board will meet on 23 to 25 March 2026 to select promising concept notes and invite applicants to submit full proposals. From April to June 2026 the secretariat will support the development of full applications, and the final selection is expected in September 2026. The process will then move into technical refinement before implementation, which should happen early 2027.

34. Bureau members were invited to provide their feedback. Several members cautioned that such a high demand for funding may create unrealistic expectations among applicants, and highlighted the need for prioritization through clearer criteria, better communication of funding limits and stronger emphasis on sustainability. Andrea Rother suggested presenting funded project outcomes at the International Conference. Rory O'Neill asked for clarification on regional distribution, multi-sectoral representation and eligibility of certain entities. Lamin Jaite reflected on the need to define suitable criteria to select projects for the 2nd round.

35. In response to Andrea Rother's comment, the secretariat advised that the Special Programme would be in a better position to showcase project outcomes including guidance on implementing domestic financing. In terms of the regional and sectoral balance, project proposals with multisectoral representation were being prioritized.

8. Update on refreshing GFC Focal Points

36. The secretariat reported progress on updating and expanding the national focal point network. Since October 2025, the number of updated nominations complying with the new procedures has doubled (82 countries), while 63 countries

still need to confirm or update pre-ICCM5 nominated focal points. On sectoral representation, there are 8 national focal points from health sector and 5 alternates. Whilst there are no national focal points from the labour sector yet, three alternate focal points for labour have been nominated. The Bureau agreed to a deadline of 31 March 2026 to remove pre-ICCM5 nominated focal points from the website should there be no response from a final call for nominations.

37. The secretariat then elaborated on the pilot induction program for ***new*** focal points that has been running from February to April 2026. There has been enthusiastic participation, and the secretariat will reach out to regional focal points to arrange orientation sessions, technical briefings and peer-to-peer exchanges. The program will conclude with a hybrid session at the end of April 2026.

38. Rory O'Neill enquired about the lack of nominations of national focal points from labour, to which the secretariat explained that aside from encouraging these nominations, it is up to countries to decide from which ministries they would like to nominate national focal points.

39. Bob Diderich congratulated the secretariat for the efforts in its work on focal points, particularly the increased engagement from health and labour sectors and encouraged its continuation. Sara Brosché acknowledged the importance of the training program and suggested reaching out to other stakeholders, including civil society groups, to share practical experience on multistakeholder engagements. Andrea Rother asked for clarification on the new procedure requirements for nominations by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The secretariat clarified that under the updated procedure, nominations should be confirmed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that follow-up would focus on older nominations that had not yet been confirmed. Magdalena Frydrych asked about the participation of focal points from the Central European region in the training programme, and the secretariat confirmed that five focal points from that region were participating. Koki Takaki reflected on relatively low number of nominations from the Asia-Pacific region and offered regional support to encourage nominations.

9. GFC financing and organisation

40. The secretariat reported on the financial status of the GFC and explained that the total contributions since 2023 were USD 4.7 million. Expenditures between 2023 and 2025 amounted to USD 2.88 million, and the remaining balance was USD 1.8 million. The budget requirement for 2026 (including the International Conference) is USD 3.9 million, leaving a current shortfall of **USD 2.1 million**. Some pledges and contributions are still in process, and in-kind contributions from Georgia and Armenia have been offered. The secretariat emphasized the need for **additional donor support** to ensure conference delivery, staffing, implementation support and stakeholder participation.

41. The President thanked the secretariat for this update. The secretariat then described new cooperation arrangements including a Global Framework on Chemicals Unit which brings together the GFC and the Special Program secretariats. The mandates and structures of the Special Programme and GFC Fund Executive Boards and International Conference of the Global Framework on

Chemicals remain the same. There is no merger of the two separate Trust Funds. The new structure aims to improve efficiency, enhance coherence, share administrative services and strengthen coordination and cooperation.

42. Thomas Sverre indicated that his constituency was divided on this new cooperation: while some applaud this approach, others believe that this cooperation should be approved by UNEA. The secretariat replied that it is within the scope of the Executive Director's role to organize the secretariats in the proposed way.

43. With no further comments, the President moved to the next agenda item.

10. Next meeting of the Bureau

44. The President invited the secretariat to propose some dates for the next Bureau meetings. The secretariat proposed the following: 10th meeting on 18 June (online); 11th meeting on 24 September (online); 12th meeting on Saturday 14 November (in person).

45. Several Bureau members noted that 24 September conflicts with the POPRC meeting and advised that the week after would be better. There was a request for an additional Bureau meeting in May, either in the week of the 4th or the 18th, focused exclusively on the International Conference preparations. A preference for a face-to-face meeting, funding permitting, was also raised. The secretariat agreed to send a doodle poll to confirm future meetings.

46. To conclude, the President asked if the International Conference can be attended online. The secretariat confirmed that this is envisaged, provided enough funding is obtained.

11. Any other business (AOB)

47. The President invited Bureau members and the secretariat to introduce any other requests under this item.

48. The secretariat indicated there were no further issues raised.

12. Closure of the meeting

49. The President thanked all Bureau members for their engaged participation at the ninth Bureau meeting and the secretariat's hard work. The meeting was closed at 16:30 CET.

Annex

Participants

Bureau Members: Ms. Aisha Humera (Pakistan, Asia-Pacific, President), Ms. Magdalena Frydrych (Poland, Central and Eastern Europe), and Mr. Sverre-Thomas Jahre (Norway, Western Europe and Others), Mr. Santos Virgilio (Angola, Africa) and Ms. Vanessa Aliaga (Peru, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regional Focal Points: Mr. Koki Takaki (Japan for Asia-Pacific), Mr. Napoleon Garcia (El Salvador for Latin America and the Caribbean), Mr. Ivo de Zwaan (The Netherlands for Western Europe and Other Groups), Ms. Suzana Andonova (North Macedonia for Central and Eastern Europe), and Mr. Lamin Jaiteh (the Gambia, Africa).

Representatives of non-governmental participants and the IOMC: Ms. Chrysanthi Sofokleous (International Council of Chemical Associations, industry), Ms. Sara Brosché (International Pollutants Elimination Network, public interest group), Mr. Bob Diderich (OECD, IOMC), Ms. Andrea Rother (School of Public Health, University of Cape Town, health), Mr. Rory O'Neill (Trade Unions, labour).

Regrets: None.