

Co-chairs' summary of the outcomes from contact group 2 on emerging policy issues and issues of concern

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Meeting: 25 June 2025, 4.50 to 7 p.m.

1. Contact group 2 on emerging policy issues and issues of concern was established at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals with the following mandate:
 - (a) Reflect on the proposals submitted by the responsible participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) regarding existing emerging policy issues and issues of concern, as outlined in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/5;
 - (b) Provide guidance for the continued implementation of resolution V/5 of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, on emerging policy issues and issues of concern, until the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals takes a final decision on the future of each of the emerging policy issues;
 - (c) Consider the proposal set out in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/CRP.1, entitled “Towards a broader approach to lead: expanding the scope beyond lead in paint”;
 - (d) Take into account the relevant documents on the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides.
2. Group members engaged in a constructive and open exchange of views on the eight emerging policy issues and issues of concern, with the aim of informing the development of a report by the responsible participating organizations of IOMC, as mandated by resolution V/5. Discussions focused on the proposals submitted by the responsible participating organizations of IOMC, as outlined in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/5. The group also reflected on how the emerging policy issues and issues of concern could be integrated into the implementation programmes and provided guidance for the continued implementation of resolution V/5 in the lead-up to the first session of the International Conference. The session was marked by a frank and productive dialogue. Delegates highlighted the overarching need to clarify how the emerging policy issues and issues of concern could be effectively integrated into the implementation programmes, as well as the potential implications of such integration, before further decisions were made. In addition to those general views, participants shared the following perspectives on each of the individual emerging policy issues and issues of concern.
3. **Lead in paint and the proposal) entitled “Towards a broader approach to lead” (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/CRP.1):** The contact group expressed general support for the continued designation of lead in paint as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals. Many delegates also supported expanding the scope to include lead more broadly. However, it was noted that that broader scope should be treated as a new issue of concern and follow the procedure outlined in annex I to the Framework, on issues of concern, in order to avoid diverting attention from ongoing efforts regarding lead in paint, among other considerations. Several participants encouraged the development of more detailed workplans to address broader sources of lead – for example, by identifying prevention, mitigation and regulation as potential priority areas. One delegation expressed opposition to considering the broader scope of lead under the Global Framework on Chemicals.
4. **Chemicals in products:** Diverging views were expressed regarding the future treatment of the issue. While some delegates supported its integration into the implementation programmes as an alternative to its continued designation as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, others viewed integration as a complementary approach. Several participants called for further clarification on how such integration might be approached, including through the report to be prepared by the responsible organizations of IOMC. Several also emphasized the importance of shifting from a chemical-by-chemical approach to a more holistic, sector-focused strategy.
5. **Nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials:** Many delegates supported the continued designation of the issue as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, citing current regulatory and action gaps, ongoing research needs, and the particular challenges faced by developing countries. The lead IOMC organizations acknowledged their limited resources, which constrained their capacity to lead further efforts in a meaningful way. They suggested that the issue could be addressed through integration into the implementation programmes as an alternative, and they invited other organizations to take a leadership role in advancing work on the issue.

6. **Managing perfluorinated chemicals and the transition to safer alternatives:** The contact group expressed broad support for the continued designation of the issue as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals. Delegates highlighted per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a priority issue in many regions, citing long-range environmental transport and widespread detection across environmental media. Several participants emphasized the need for holistic action, including the use of all types of activities – such as collaboration through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – and addressing a broad range of applications, including in agriculture.

7. **Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs):** The contact group expressed support for the continued designation of EDCs as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, with several participants also acknowledging and appreciating the work done on EDCs by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and OECD. One delegation supported the mainstreaming of EDCs in the implementation programmes.

8. **Environmentally persistent pharmaceutical pollutants:** Several delegates expressed support for the continued designation of the issue as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, emphasizing that substantial work remained to be done and underscoring the issue's cross-sectoral nature, particularly its strong link to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the One Health approach. Several participants called for further clarification of what additional actions could be taken, which other platforms could be leveraged to address the issue, and how it might be effectively integrated into the implementation programmes across relevant sectors, including health, agriculture and animal welfare.

9. **Hazardous substances within the life cycle of electrical and electronic products:** Many delegates supported the continued designation of the issue as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, highlighting the specific needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition and the potential environmental and health benefits of addressing the issue. However, some suggested that it could instead be integrated into the implementation programmes, particularly given the relevance of the electronics sector as a priority area under implementation programme 2. The lead IOMC organization acknowledged its limited resources, which constrained its ability to lead further action, and invited other organizations to assume a leadership role in advancing work on the issue.

10. **Highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs):** Diverging views were expressed on the future of the issue. Several delegates supported discontinuing its designation as an issue of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, citing the global alliance as a sufficient mechanism for moving forward on the issue. In contrast, others emphasized the need to continue recognizing the issue as one of concern under the Global Framework on Chemicals, at least until the global alliance became fully operational, noting that the issue remained insufficiently addressed. One participant pointed out that the global alliance served primarily as a coordination mechanism rather than an implementation body. There was a need to reevaluate the linkages between the two processes once the global alliance was up and running. Another participant proposed instead integrating the issue into the implementation programmes. Several participants called for concrete steps to support developing countries in transitioning to safer alternatives, while underscoring the importance of allowing countries to develop their own lists of HHPs, tailored to national circumstances and conditions.

11. The co-chairs thanked the participants for their valuable contributions to the discussion and said that the contact group had fulfilled its mandate, and that the views expressed during the meeting had been noted and that a summary thereof would be annexed to the report of the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals.

12. They said that the feedback and input gathered during the contact group's deliberations would assist the secretariat and the participating organizations of IOMC in further developing the report as requested in resolution V/5 so as to include (a) an update on progress achieved in relation to the existing emerging policy issues and other issues of concern indicating how the work done contributed to achieving the strategic objective(s) and targets of the Framework; (b) an analysis of opportunities to further address the emerging policy issues and other issues of concern; and (c) a recommendation on the future of each of those emerging policy issues and other issues of concern under the Framework, including workplans, targets and indicators, and timelines, if relevant (in line with annex I to the Framework), to inform deliberations at the first International Conference.

13. In addition, the co-chairs noted that the secretariat would make available the nomination procedure on the issues of concern on the Global Framework on Chemicals website. They invited the proponents of the proposal contained in document UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/CRP.1 to follow the procedure in submitting their proposal for consideration by the International Conference at its first session.
14. In closing, the co-chairs thanked the IOMC organizations for preparing the working document and the secretariat for its invaluable support throughout the meeting.