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INFORMATION NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Second meeting 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 (OEWG-2) (Nairobi, Kenya, 11 – 15 December 2023) - Compilation of statements from the European Union and its Member States

Delegations will find enclosed, for information, in the Annex to this note a compilation of the statements from the EU and its Member States as delivered at SPP OEWG-2.

Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel on
chemicals, waste and pollution prevention (OEWG-2)

(Nairobi, Kenya, 11 – 15 December 2023)

STATEMENTS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES

2. Election of officers

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Colleagues,

The European Union and its Member States would like to congratulate the elected bureau members. We also echo interventions made earlier today, in its commitment to condemn and fight against racism.

The EU remains fully committed to the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance including its contemporary forms.

We support the views of those expressing the regret that the case of racism, which we consider has been adequately addressed and closed, has been brought to this meeting, distracting the participants from substance discussion.

We invite everyone to use the remaining time as productively as possible, to make visible progress on the creation of the science policy panel.

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

Thank you, Madame Chair,

The EU and its Member States would like to express their gratitude to the Republic of Kenya, to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting this meeting and to UNEP for the work undertaken to organize the meeting.

We would like to thank the Secretariat of the Open-Ended Working Group for the documentation submitted for our consideration.

Madame Chair,

The EU and Its Member States support the proposed ‘Skeleton outline’ of the output of the OEWG in general, and we will propose and explain some amendments when you open this topic for consideration. We also welcome the proposals contained in the Information Document 10 which constitute a good starting point for discussions.

We consider that the ‘Objective’ of the Panel the OEWG has reached a good level of consensus.

Regarding the ‘Functions’, very good progress has already been achieved. With regard to Capacity Building, we understand that more discussions are needed, and we are ready to further engage, including that we are ready to better explain our proposal made during OEWG 1.2.

On ‘Operating Principles’ we believe that the proposal contained in Information Document 10, provides a good starting point for negotiations, and look forward to discussing which amendments are needed to this text.

On ‘Institutional Arrangements’ we also consider that the proposal contained in the Information Document 10 constitutes a good starting point for discussions and we are looking forward to contributing to the further development of the provisions with our insights as well.

The topic of ‘Relationships with Relevant Stakeholders’ is very important to us and we are looking forward to start discussing this issue in the OEWG.

As in IPCC, IPBES, and other scientific advisory bodies, a clear ‘Policy on Conflict of Interests’ is essential for ensuring the credibility of the SPP. We consider that the OEWG should get started on the Work-related Processes and Procedures for the panel.

Madame Chair,

To close, the European Union and its Member States look forward to engaging in fruitful and constructive discussions in the Plenary and the Contact Groups.

Furthermore, we hope to agree at this meeting on intersessional work to prepare the next meeting so that we can finalize our important task by the end of 2024. We stand ready to support the Secretariat on the tasks ahead of OEWG3.

The EU and its Member States are committed to work closely with all the participants in this meeting to prepare the ground for the OEWG3.

Skeleton outline of proposals for the establishment of a science-policy panel

Thank you, Madam Chair,

We would like to thank the secretariat for the proposal for a Skeleton outline presented in Document 2/2 and the concrete text proposals contained in INF 10. It is of utmost importance to have a clear and focused structure to be populated by relevant content.

We are willing to work with this skeleton and we have some preference about the parts of the skeleton which should be decided already in the intergovernmental meeting and those which could be set when the SPP start its work.

Thank you.

Scope and objective, functions and operating principles and Conflict of Interest

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Discussions at OEWG 1.2 identified a preference for a short yet broad objective for the SPP. We agreed to include the functions as set out in UNEA resolution 5/8. Therefore, the EU and its Member States suggest not reopening the discussion on the agreed functions.

However, we are ready to move forward on the negotiations and engage in further discussion regarding the fifth possible function which was proposed at OEWG 1.2.

Regarding the operating principles, we would like to encourage starting discussions based on the principles contained in document INF/10. We believe that operating principles should be concise, clear and should stand on their own, as they should guide the panel's work in all its facets.

The EU and its Member States appreciate the draft Conflict of Interest Policy set out in Addendum 1 and the draft on Procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Panel in Addendum 2 to the document INF 10. We look forward to discussing the details in a contact group.

Thank you very much.

Institutional arrangements and relationship with relevant stakeholders

Thank you, Madam, Chair,

We welcome the draft proposal on institutional arrangements set out in INF 10 and propose that it should be used as the starting point for discussions at this Contact Group.

We are of the view that we do not need to re-invent the wheel as we can look into the arrangements of both climate as well as biodiversity panels to get good inspiration. We will provide some proposals for the improvement of this text.

We would also like to highlight that the mandate of UNEA 5.8 refers to the Rules of Procedure for the Panel and not exclusively of its plenary.

The EU and its Member States attach great importance to the involvement of stakeholders in the work of the panel at the appropriate levels. This will contribute to transparency in the work of the Panel, to the incorporation of best available expertise and information, and will enhance the outreach and impact of its products.

In this regard, we appreciate the draft text proposals on strategic partnerships provided in the Information document INF 10 which constitute a good basis to start discussions. In establishing strategic partnerships, the Panel should act in line with UN and UNEP rules and procedures.

We support the establishment of a Contact Group to address this topic.

Thank you.

Work-related processes and procedures

Thank you, Madam Chair,

The tables of content provided in INF 10 provide a starting point for discussion, even if they will need to be filled with concrete text proposals. To this end, the EU and its Member States in general believe that the processes and procedures established under IPBES and IPCC could be valid models to be adapted to the work of the future Panel, taking into account the specificities of the future Panel in each aspect.

Also, the EU and its Member States suggest prioritizing the development of those processes and procedures which are necessary. to be developed by the OEWG over those which can be decided once the Panel is established. In this respect, we consider that the conflict of interest protocol a priority to be proposed by the OEWG. For the other procedures the OEWG might develop first proposals if time allows, which could then be further developed by the future Panel itself.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

5. Options for the timetable and organization of the future work of the ad hoc open-ended working group

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for issuing document 2/7 on work undertaken by the Secretariat in the intersessional period, the budget expenditure and the provisional workplan. We find this document to be a good basis for our discussions.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed generously to support the work of the Secretariat and to support the ad hoc OEWG.

The EU and its Member States note that the programme of work and budget could benefit from being more transparent.

The EU and its Member States consider that due to the limited time for the OEWG process, it is necessary to agree on a mandate to start intersessional work ahead of OEWG3. We consider that the intersessional work, including by the Secretariat must relate to the gaps and needs identified during the session. We are happy to further discuss this matter during this week taking into account the outcomes of the discussion.

We are ready to actively engage in the discussions on budget and intersessional work in a contact group or an informal setting.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

9. Closure of the session

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

The EU and its Member States would like to express our appreciation for your constructive guidance madame Chair and for the preparatory work done by the Bureau and the Secretariat in the run-up to the meeting.

Our gratitude goes also to the very efficient teams of co-facilitators who successfully led discussions on many important aspects for the establishment of the SPP and to all of the participants for their active and constructive engagement in discussions, which made us progress on many important elements.

We agreed at the United Nations Environment Assembly – UNEA – to establish a Science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution by 2024.

There is currently an important gap in the global science-policy landscape that addresses the Triple Planetary Crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. While we already have panels to address Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss, the third panel is still to be created. This Science-policy panel will fill this gap. The EU and its Member States are committed to this objective.

With the latest scientific studies pointing at an estimated 9 million premature deaths and cost trillions of dollars every year from air, water and soil pollution, the whole world is looking at us to address this missing link to address chemicals, waste and pollution.

This stresses the importance to finalise our work at the next OEWG building on the advancements of this session. But first, it is our responsibility to move forward in the intersessional period to ensure progress towards our ambitious goal.

It is essential that we continue our good work in a spirit of close cooperation, good faith and trust. We look forward to doing this good work with you.

In this way we will be able to make a significant contribution to the global efforts to effectively address the Triple planetary crisis, achieve the SDGs, protect the environment and human health for the benefit of current and future generations!

Thank you for your attention.