

**Fourth Teleconference of the Bureau of the
International Conference on Chemicals Management for its fifth session**
Wednesday, 28 October 2020, from 14:00 – 16:30 CET

DRAFT REPORT OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE ICCM5 BUREAU

1. Opening and welcome

Ms. Sahler, President of ICCM5 welcomed participants to the twelfth meeting and fourth teleconference of the ICCM5 Bureau. The President thanked everyone for joining the meeting and for their continued commitment during these unprecedented times. She stressed the need for the sound management of chemicals and waste (SMCW) to contribute to achieving SDG3 and overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. She further appreciated the establishment of the Virtual Working Groups (VWGs) and Technical Briefings (TBs) and reported that the first TB was a big success with a high number of participants. The President thanked the IP Co-chairs and Bureau members for their support and guidance on the mandates of the VWGs and their ongoing engagement. She informed the meeting on the establishment of the High-level Declaration Informal Drafting Group and the call that was sent to all stakeholders to submit inputs. The deadline for the submissions had been extended to 29 October 2020.

She further reiterated that due to the continuing unpredictable circumstances it would be even more important that Bureau members exercise flexibility to meet challenges. The primary focus of this meeting would be to turn attention to IP4 and ICCM5. Her expectations were to take a decision on whether the face to face meeting in March 2021 in Romania can take place or if not, to discuss alternative options. Lastly, the President drew attention to the video of the German Minister for the Environment, Ms. Svenja Schulze and the UNEP Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen which was released on 5 October 2020 when ICCM5 should have originally taken place (available on the SAICM website).

The President requested and received approval for the report of the eleventh meeting and third teleconference of the ICCM5 Bureau presented in document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/4. She thanked everyone and closed this agenda item.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The President introduced the provisional agenda as set out in document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/1. She pointed out that since additional comments had been received on the silent procedure to adopt procedural decisions during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic when the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) is not in session she would propose to add a new agenda item 5 to consider this matter.

Ms. Sahler sought approval to limit the speaking time to no more than two interventions for each agenda item and two to three minutes per intervention to ensure that all agenda items receive the necessary attention and decisions can be made. She also reminded participants that all Bureau members were to be given an equal opportunity to speak.

The meeting agenda was adopted by the participants.

3. Organization and planning for ICCM5 scheduled for 5 – 9 July 2021 in Bonn Germany

The President acknowledged the difficulty in planning ICCM5 under the present circumstances and thanked the Secretariat for their continued planning together with her team.

(a) Update on the establishment and launch of the virtual working groups to develop recommendations for consideration of ICCM5 regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020

Ms. Sahler invited the IP Co-chairs to provide an update on the VWG process. Mr. Morin explained that two sessions of the technical briefing: Welcome and overview with the ICCM5 President and Intersessional Process (IP) Co-chairs took place on Thursday 22 October 2020. There were approximately 180 participants registered for each session and active engagement during the Q&A sessions. He noted a positive atmosphere and desire for people to engage and advance the beyond 2020 agenda. He expressed confidence that the international community will be well prepared for IP4. Ms. Judith Torres recognized that it was still early to see how the groups will progress on their work, however she also had a positive impression from these virtual sessions. She was worried about the fact of having English as the only working language and pointed out that the quality of the participation would need to be regularly monitored.

The President thanked the IP Co-chairs for their update. She said that she was also very pleased with the active and broad participation in the Kick-off meeting of the VWG on Governance and Mechanisms to Support Implementation. She expressed hope that the work would continue in this way ensuring successful outcomes of the VWGs. She reminded the Bureau that the co-facilitators from the four VWGs will be invited to next Bureau meeting to report on progress made under their respective VWGs.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that the system that was used was difficult because the chat and attendee list were not accessible to the attendees. The SAICM Secretariat noted that such technical issues will be addressed for future meetings. Additionally, the Secretariat invited Bureau members in a position to do so provide translation support for inputs received from their respective region. The Secretariat also noted that the SAICM Secretariat can provide limited translation support upon request.

(b) Discussion on the High-level Segment and side-events

Ms. Sahler invited the Secretariat to present document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/2 – Proposal to convene a High-level Segment during ICCM5 developed in consultation with the Host Government Germany. Following the presentation, the President noted that it is her expectation that invitations to the High-level Segment will be sent out before the end of the year and signed by both the German Minister for the Environment and the UNEP Executive Director. She offered the following guiding questions and opened the floor for the discussion: What would a successful High-level Segment look like? What topics should be discussed during the Panel discussions? Identify possible panelists and keynote speakers? How could ministers from other sectors be engaged? What format should the HLS follow?

The IPEN representative suggested that we need to project what a desired result would look like and then work backwards. He proposed as an overall result a UN General Assembly Resolution lifting chemicals management higher on the political agenda. The ICCM5 President added that her expectation would be that besides the adoption of a new framework for the SAICM successor, there should be political commitment to undertake steps for more political and public awareness on chemicals and waste. She referred to the High Ambition Alliance to possibly taking the lead towards the UN General Assembly armed with a strong High-level Declaration as key outcome of ICCM5.

The WEOG Regional Focal Point flagged the importance of using the High-level Segment to raise the political profile across different sectors and stakeholders ensuring broad engagement. She asked if there would be a back-up plan for Thursday afternoon in case the High-level Declaration would not be fully agreed upon. Ms. Sahler responded that ongoing discussions in smaller groups in parallel to the official meeting programme would not be unusual. However, she agreed that the final objective would be to adopt a revised Overarching Policy Strategy as a SAICM successor, and she expressed confidence in achieving this objective.

The chair of the IOMC asked whether some of the scheduled meetings could also be held virtually to attract more global participation. The ICCM5 President noted that virtual meetings – not only during the High-level Segment but also for side events during the ICCM5 would be encouraged and would broaden multi-sectoral engagement including at the Ministerial level.

The CEE Bureau member asked how to identify and invite leading scientists and academics. Ms. Sahler invited Bureau members to propose leading scientists from their respective constituencies using this opportunity to inform politicians about the importance of SMCW to achieve the SDGs.

The ICCA representative informed the meeting about their recent experience in convening a large virtual event, by ensuring a balance of thought-provoking keynote speakers and concrete tangible outcomes such as signing MoUs. She stressed the need for excellent IT infrastructure. She noted that she will provide a list of CEOs to invite to the High-level Segment.

The ITUC representative asked for clarification since the presentation didn't explicitly mention stakeholders from civil society and the labour sector. He also reiterated the importance of advancing on the development of the High-level Declaration prior to ICCM5 to ensure adequate time for reflection and commitment during ICCM5.

The representative of Asia Pacific noted that consultations on the HLS should not run in parallel with the ICCM5 Plenary taking into consideration the limitations of small delegations. In addition, he noted that more detail is needed on the topics, for example on capacity building and expectations of the Panels.

To end this agenda item, the ICCM5 President requested the Secretariat to continue with the detailed planning of the ICCM5 and its High-level Segment and to provide an update at every subsequent meeting. Additional inputs to document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/2 – Proposal to convene a High-level Segment during ICCM5 were invited by 15 November 2020.

(c) Discussion on the communications and outreach efforts, including key messages towards ICCM5

The ICCM5 President invited the SAICM Secretariat to present SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/ - Communications and outreach efforts towards ICCM5 developed in consultation with the Host Government Germany. Ms. Nalini Sharma highlighted the importance of a communications strategy and invited Bureau members to act as ambassadors for the Beyond 2020 process. She presented the proposed key outcomes, visual branding, key messages and the 3-phased approach to (1) Inform / Remind, (2) Connect and (3) Act to raise the political profile in advance of ICCM5. She further invited the Bureau members to share their views while recognizing that members would need additional time to consult with their constituents.

Ms. Sahler reiterated the importance of the Bureau member's buy-in to develop a common set of key messages and opened the floor for comments and questions.

The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the development of the draft and agreed on the importance of joint messaging and outreach. The ITUC representative proposed to organize sectoral online meetings to promote the key messages and stimulate multi-sectoral engagement in advance of ICCM5.

The ICCA representative noted that she will resend the key messages sent to the Secretariat last year, which include a set of positive messages to include such as the need to innovation and knowledge sharing.

The WEOG Regional Focal Point reminded everyone to be careful not to prejudge the outcome of the High-level Declaration, which is still under development. She further stressed the need to be cautious when naming substances and provide more messages on the costs of inaction.

Several Bureau members asked for roles and responsibilities to be more clearly defined within the document, for example those of the different sectors and welcomed the idea to have an overarching set of high-level key messages, which could then be adapted to each sector, region and stakeholder group's needs. Besides that,

several Bureau members proposed to illustrate the messages by adding concrete examples on issues of concern.

Concern was raised with regard to the key message on donors contributions on page 8, and the Asia Pacific Regional Focal Point pointed out that it is not only the cash contributions to the Secretariat that maintain SAICM but also the financial commitments provided at the national level.

The IOMC representative suggested to link the communication and messaging to other high-level events and campaigns taking place in the lead up to ICCM5, as well as, to be prepared to react to spontaneous incidents such as the Beirut explosion.

The Bureau member representing CEE highlighted the importance of SAICM National Focal Points to be actively engaged in the outreach activities.

To conclude, Ms. Sahler reinforced the importance of highlighting the interlinkages across the different sectors and to ensure that the communication messages are simple and straightforward and easy to understand for the general public, well-illustrated through concrete example and that journalists are considered an important intermediaries to involve at an early stage. Additional inputs to document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.TC.4/2 – Proposal to convene a High-level Segment during ICCM5 were invited by 15 November 2020.

4. Update on the organization and planning for IP4 scheduled for 15 – 19 March 2021 in Bucharest, Romania.

Ms. Sahler requested the Secretariat to introduce this agenda item. Mr. de Mesa highlighted the regular communication with the focal points in the Romanian Government on the planning for IP4 in March 2021. Preparations have been ongoing and has benefited from the work that had advanced earlier this year before IP4 postponement.

Mr. de Mesa highlighted the need for the Bureau to take a decision on convening IP4 in a face to face setting in March 2021. He noted that several international meetings planned for early 2021 will not be held face to face. At this stage of the IP4 planning, the Romanian Government needs to start signing non-return and costly agreements. Due consideration to the evolving situation with the second wave of Covid-19 is also required. And finally, he noted possible changes in the Romanian Ministry of Environment, following local elections scheduled in December 2020.

The President and Bureau members provided their views on realistic possibilities of convening IP4 in Bucharest, Romania in March 2021. The Bureau noted that IP4 is likely to be postponed and it would be important to inform the Government of Romania. They highlighted that the message to be sent to stakeholders is to continue the momentum and engage in the intersessional work through the virtual working groups.

The Bureau also decided that options for reconvening IP4 would be considered at their next meeting scheduled for December 2020. In this regard, the Secretariat was requested to prepare possible scenarios to convene IP4 taking on board examples and experiences from other UN agencies and processes on their 2021 planning.

5. Silent procedure

The President gave the floor to the Secretariat for introducing this matter. Ms. Sharma explained the process and rationale for using the proposed 2-step approach, which included a silent procedure to adopt an enabling decision to authorize the ICCM President in consultation with the Bureau to take a limited number of procedural decisions on organizational, administrative and budgetary matters in order to ensure the continuation of its mandated activities and those of the Secretariat, followed by the silent procedure on a specific procedural decision on the proposed 2021 budget. The Secretariat apologized that this information was not shared with the Bureau in advance of circulating the documentation for their review.

A number of Bureau members expressed concerns that the 2-step process was not explained in detail at its previous meeting. They asked for more clarity on the type of decisions that would be taken following the adoption of the enabling decision to take a limited number of procedural decisions on organizational, administrative and budgetary matters in order to ensure the continuation of its mandated activities and those of the Secretariat. They also requested to extend the duration of the silent procedure to 20 days. The Bureau also noted that all stakeholders should be consulted on this process, however only government focal points will be able to formally object in accordance with the ICCM rules of procedure.

An additional concern was raised on breaking the silence, and the need to include options for direct communication to the Secretariat or the President, in addition to the respective Bureau representative, in case of questions or need for clarification from SAICM national focal points.

Ms. Sharma thanked the Bureau for their comments and confirmed that all proposed changes will be addressed in the both the cover letter and the enabling draft decision, and will be circulated again to the Bureau for final review before circulating the documents for the silent procedure.

6. Next teleconference of the Bureau

It was agreed that the thirteenth meeting and fifth teleconference of the ICCM5 Bureau would be held during the second week of December 2020. As per established practice, the Secretariat will provide options for dates and times.

7. Any other matters

The ICCM5 President asked if any member of the Bureau had any other matter to propose, and there were no further requests under this agenda item.

8. Closure of the meeting

The President thanked the Secretariat for organizing the twelfth meeting and fourth teleconference of the ICCM5 Bureau and all Bureau members for their attendance and continuing contributions.

The President closed the meeting at 4:50pm.

Annex

Participants

Bureau Members: Ms. Gertrud Sahler (Germany, ICCM5 Bureau Member Western Europe and Others Group), Mr. Szymon Domagalski (Poland, ICCM5 Bureau Member Central and Eastern Europe) and Ms. Valentina Sierra (Uruguay, ICCM5 Bureau Member Latin America and the Caribbean).

Regional Focal Points: Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl (Iran representing Asia-Pacific), Mr. Vladimir Lenev (Russian Federation, representing Central and Eastern Europe), Ms. Suzanne Leppinen (Canada representing Western Europe and Others) and Ms. Ana Fernandez Blanco (Argentina representing Latin America and the Caribbean).

Representatives of non-governmental participants and the IOMC: Mr. Joe Di Gangi (Public Interest Organizations), Mr. Rory O'Neill (Labour NGOs), Ms. Servet Goren (Industry) and Mr. Manal Aziz (Chair of the IOMC).

SAICM Secretariat: Ms. Nalini Sharma (SAICM Coordinator), Mr. Jose de Mesa, Mr. Juan Caicedo and Ms. Marijana Todorovic.

UN Environment Programme: Mr. Stadler Trengove (Principal Legal Officer, UNEP) and Mr. Juan Manuel Barbeito.

Observers: Mr. David Morin (Co-chair of the intersessional process), Ms. Judith Torres (Co-chair of the intersessional process), Jutta Emig (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany) and Mr. Vassilios Karavezyris (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany).