



Novel Entities Update - 2



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Dear Friends,

Please recall that the September 2023 update of the Planetary Boundaries has set a boundary for Novel Entities at zero. Last month, we had briefly introduced the topic of managing the production and use of chemicals globally. As promised, this month we shall present the major milestones on this journey. As you know, it all started with a global initiative titled '**Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)**'. The major milestones beginning with its conceptualization, formal adoption and eventual transformation into the **Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)** are listed below.



You may kindly use the hyper-links to the relevant web pages for additional information.

1990 - **ILO Convention 170** on Chemicals was adopted. In this convention, the following precursors to this convention were also acknowledged. Therefore we may say that global efforts by humanity to manage chemicals date back to 1971.

- The Benzene Convention and Recommendation, 1971,
- The Occupational Cancer Convention and Recommendation, 1974,
- The Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention and recommendation, 1977,
- The Occupational Safety and Health Convention and Recommendation, 1981,
- The Occupational Health Services Convention and Recommendation, 1985,
- The Asbestos Convention and Recommendation, 1986, and
- The list of occupational diseases, as amended in 1980, appended to The Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964.

1992 - **Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**

This plan was the outcome of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which took place in Johannesburg in 1992. It is a comprehensive blueprint of actions to be taken globally, nationally and regionally by various organizations, actors, major groups and local communities in order to protect natural environment directly affected by humans. We shall discuss this plan in a forthcoming blog.

Mid-1990s - **UNEP Governing Council**

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was established by the UN General Assembly in Dec. 1972; with its Governing Council comprising of 58 elected members. In March 2013, the Governing Council was expanded, "allowing representation of all 193 Member States of the UN, including businesses, civil society, and other stakeholders". The GC was renamed as United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

The idea of a global forum for managing the use of all chemicals was floated by UNEP in the mid-1990s.

Between 1994 and 2008, six sessions of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety IFCS were held at intervals of 2-3 years. The **IFCS sessions and reports (1994 to 2008)** are available at:

[International Conference on Chemical Safety \(Forum I\), Stockholm, Sweden, April 1994](#)

[Forum II, Ottawa, Canada, February 1997](#)

[Forum III, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, October 2000](#)

[Forum IV, Bangkok, Thailand, November 2003](#)

[Forum V, Budapest, Hungary, September, 2006](#)

[Forum VI, Dakar, Senegal, April 2008](#)

2002 - [World Summit on Sustainable Development \(WSSD\)](#) – called for creation of a separate entity: Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The summit also set a goal for 2020, when all chemicals would be used and produced in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

2003 – 2005 – A Preparatory Committee held three rounds of discussions annually during these years, laying the foundation for the First International Conference on Chemicals Management to be held in the following year.

2006 – Dubai, UAE hosted the First **International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 1)**. Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations met in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 February 2006. ICCM 1 set out strategic priorities, institutional arrangements and terms of reference for the Quick Start Programme.

2009 – Geneva, Switzerland – **ICCM 2**

ICCM 2 reviewed and evaluated progress in the implementation of SAICM and

“addressed emerging policy issues (nanotechnology, chemicals in articles, lead in paint and electronic waste), considered long-term financing of SAICM, took strategic decisions on the future direction of SAICM, determined future reporting arrangements, finalized certain outstanding institutional matters, exchanged scientific and technical information and decided on the budget and activities for the next inter-sessional period”.

2012 – Nairobi, Kenya – **ICCM 3**

A major milestone of ICCM 3 was the use of ‘tangible data on the 20 indicators of progress’ for evaluation. A Global Plan of Action was developed. Recommendations from the Executive Board of the Quick Start Programme were discussed.

2015 – Geneva, Switzerland – **ICCM 4**

The last decision-making meeting before 2020, identified the remaining challenges, adopted strategic decisions to enable the international community to achieve the 2020 goal specified in the [Johannesburg Plan of Implementation](#).

“The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is the action plan of United Nations. It was the outcome of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which took place in Johannesburg in 1992. It is a comprehensive blueprint of actions to be taken globally, nationally and regionally by various organizations, actors, major groups and local communities in order to protect natural environment directly affected by humans.”

ICCM 4 in an accompanying note said: [A world without chemicals? No - A chemical-safe future? Yes](#)

2017 - Brasilia, Brazil – **Inter-sessional Process - IP 1**

An inter-sessional process to prepare recommendations regarding SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 was initiated in 2015, for decision making at the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (**ICCM 5**) scheduled to be held from 5 to 9 October 2020.

About 270 delegates attended, including 67 governments, 39 industry and non-governmental organizations and 16 intergovernmental organizations attended the first inter-sessional process – IP 1.

They exchanged views and ideas regarding what sort of global platform might be preferable to promote the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. Participants discussed:

“vision and scope; whether to maintain the current voluntary, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach; what process should be used to respond to new and emerging issues; financing implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste; linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and how the concepts of sustainable chemistry and green chemistry might fit into a post-2020 agenda”.

2018 - Stockholm, Sweden – **IP 2**

Approximately 360 delegates attended IP 2, including representatives of 68 governments, 51 industry and non-governmental organizations, and 16 intergovernmental organizations.

A preliminary report of the independent evaluation of SAICM was discussed, and possible improvements were suggested.

Participants discussed the six elements of a possible future framework on chemicals and waste:

- vision;
- policy principles;
- objectives and milestones;
- implementation arrangements;
- governance; and
- high-level political commitment.

2019 – Nairobi, Kenya – **UNEA 4** - March 2019

United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme held its fourth session in March 2019. The overall theme of UNEA 4 was ‘Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production,’

UNEA-4 addressed:

- Environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss
- Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management
- Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change.

The UNEA 4 adopted a resolution titled “Innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production”. We shall discuss this resolution in a forthcoming blog.

2019 - Montevideo, Uruguay – [OEWG 3](#) - April 2019

Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) meets inter-sessionally to prepare for each ICCM. The third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management took place from 2-4 April 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay. Over 350 participants from 85 governments, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector participated. Out of several reports, we selected the following for this newsletter:

SAICM/OEWG.3/INF/3 - Global Chemicals Outlook II Summary for Policymakers: From Legacies to Innovative Solutions -Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It may be accessed at the link below. We would discuss this and related issues in our forthcoming editions. You may find the report at the link below:

[English](#)

2019 - Bangkok, Thailand – [IP 3](#) - October 2019

The third meeting of the inter-sessional process was held at the [United Nations Conference Centre](#) in Bangkok, Thailand, from 1 to 4 October 2019. Regional meetings and technical briefings took place on 30 September 2019.

These meetings support stakeholders in their efforts to elaborate the future arrangements of the strategic approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration and adoption at the next session of the [International Conference on Chemicals Management](#) (ICCM5) to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 5 to 9 October 2020.

A host of in-session documents and information including Group A - Targets, milestones and indicators, Group B - Enhanced governance / institutional arrangements, Group C - Mechanisms to support implementation (including science-

policy and issues of concern) and Group D - Financial considerations may be accessed [here](#).

2022 - Bucharest, Romania – **IP 4** - 27 August – 2 September – resumed sessions:
2023 Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 February –3 March 2023
Bonn, Germany, from 23-24 September 2023

The Intersessional Process - IP 4 took place over an extended period beginning August – September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania and through February - March 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya and ending with Bonn, Germany in September 2023.

The focus of IP 4 was on “future arrangements of the strategic approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration and adoption at the next session of the [International Conference on Chemicals Management \(ICCM5\)](#)”.

2023 - Bonn, Germany - 25 - 30 September ICCM 5 Report:
SAICM was formally closed and replaced by **The Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)**

We reported this in our first update. We would discuss **GFC** and related issues in our forthcoming editions.

A related and positive case is humanity’s efforts to address ozone layer depletion that happened due to a specific group of chemicals – the chloro-fluro-carbons or CFCs. We provide the major milestones on this journey:

1985 - Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer

1987 - Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

Montreal Protocol Amendments

London – 1990

Copenhagen – 1992

Vienna – 1995

Montreal – 1997

Beijing – 1999

HCFC accelerated phaseout (Montreal – 2007 Adjustment)

Montreal Protocol universal ratification (196 nations) – 2009

Global production of CFCs and halons ends – 2010

