

**UN Environment Advisory Group on
Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)
Online meeting**

29 November 2016, 2-4 pm Geneva time

UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.6

**UN Environment Advisory Group on Environmental Exposure and Impact
of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals**

Report of the 1st online meeting

29 November 2016, 14:00 (Geneva time, GMT +01:00)

**I. Opening of the meeting and initial remarks, Chair of the Advisory
Group**

1. On behalf of the Chair of the Advisory Group, who could not be present, Ms. Alvarez, welcomed the participants to the online meeting and kindly asked them to introduce themselves. She explained that the online meeting aimed at following up after the third Advisory Group meeting that took place in Geneva 25-26 September 2015, before the fourth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.
2. In total 15 participants attended the online meeting. The list of participants was as follows:
 - a. **Ms. Caroline Njoki Wamai** Principal Chemist, Environment Directorate, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya
 - b. **Ms. Suzana Andonova** National SAICM Focal Point POPs Unit/Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Republic of Macedonia
 - c. **Ms. Rikke Donchil Holmberg**, Chemicals and Arctic Cooperation Danish Ministry, Environmental Protection Agency, Denmark
 - d. **Ms. Luminita Tirchila** (alternate) Senior counsellor, RO SAICM NFP Waste, Contaminated Sites and Hazardous Substances General Directorate Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania
 - e. **Ms. Sara Coombs** Senior Policy Analyst, Health Canada, on behalf of **Ms. Suzanne Leppinen**, Director, Safe Environments Directorate, Healthy Environments and Consumer Products Safety Branch
 - f. **Ms. Sue Marty**, International Council of Chemicals Association, Dow Chemicals
 - g. **Christoph Neumann**, Director International Regulatory Affairs, Crop Life International AISBL
 - h. **Mr. Joseph Digangi**, Senior Science and Technical Advisor International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)

- i. **Mr. Martin Scheringer**, Chair of International Panel on Chemicals Pollution Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH University Zurich), Switzerland,
- j. **Ms. Riana Bornman**, Department of Urology, University of Pretoria, South Africa
- k. **Ms. Kei Ohno-Woodall**, Programme Officer Scientific Support Branch, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Switzerland
- l. **Ms. Leticia Reis de Carvalho**, Director Secretary of Climate Change and Environmental Quality / Department of the Environment Quality Ministry of Environment, Brazil
- m. **Ms. Elsemieke de Boer**, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- n. **Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez**, Senior Programme Officer, Chemicals and Waste Branch, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)
- o. **Mr. Victor Estellano**, UN Environment

3. Following the introduction, the agenda¹ of the meeting was presented and adopted as such.

II. Developments since last Advisory Group meeting, UN Environment

4. Ms. Alvarez explained that since the last Advisory Group meeting, UN Environment had undertaken several activities, including the preparation of several reports, update and revision of the IOMC workplan, awareness raising materials and work on a project proposal to the GEF. The status and update of these activities was going to be presented after under each agenda item.

III. IOMC work plan, UN Environment/WHO/OECD

5. Ms. Alvarez explained that during the last Advisory Group meeting, UNEP had shared with the participants the EDCs work plan prepared by OECD, WHO and UNEP and that during ICCM 4, the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals was requested to further develop and implement the plan of work² for cooperative actions in an open inclusive and transparent manner. Therefore, the three leading organizations mentioned above had revised and updated the plan, and circulated it as an information document to the ICCM 4 bureau³.
6. It was explained that the revised workplan⁴ kept the previous format and included a revision and update of the activities planned by OECD, WHO and UN Environment for the period 2017-2020.
7. One new activity intended to facilitate the exchange of information among the different SAICM stakeholders on current and planned EDCs activities was brought to the attention of the participants. It was indicated that an online consultation had taken place and the compilation of responses were included as an annex to the revised workplan. Considering the importance of regularly sharing information on activities being undertaken by the Strategic Approach stakeholders, this activity was included in the revised plan. It was mentioned that the next compilation was expected to happen in the second semester of 2017.

¹ UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.1

² SAICM/ICCM.4/INF20, annex. Sect III.

³ SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.2/INF/3

⁴ Ibid

IV. Awareness raising materials (IISD)

8. Ms. Alvarez, explained that for technical reasons the materials for point 4 on the agenda, the Awareness Raising Materials (IISD) were not yet available for sharing and indicated that the materials were expected to be available to share soon. She highlighted that an e-mail was going to be sent when the materials would be ready and before posting them on the webpage.

V. Reports under preparation (UN Environment)

9. Ms. Alvarez presented the document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3. The document included an introduction, background and suggested approach for the different reports commissioned by UNEP to the International Panel on Chemical Pollution (IPCP). The UN Environment Advisory Group on EDCs and other interested stakeholders participating in the online meeting were asked to review the information contained in the document and to provide advice on the proposed approach during the online meeting.
10. The first report initially entitled “Overview Report I: A compilation of Lists of Chemicals Recognized as Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) or suggested as Potential EDCs”, was circulated by e-mail to the Strategic Approach stakeholders for comments and it was posted in the website from 21 July 2016 to 20 September 2016. The document was part of the work plan presented at ICCM 4 INF20 and also part of the work commission of IPCP with the idea to compile the existing knowledge available on EDCs. Important to highlight was that UN Environment did not aim at developing a global list of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals. The first report contained an overview of initiatives and a compilation of lists of chemicals that have been recognised as EDCs.
11. Originally, four subsequent overview reports were planned to be developed, but in the light of the information and comments received, the document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3 presented a different approach for consideration of the participants of the online meeting. It was proposed then to have two more overview reports:
 - i) A second report would aim at outlining existing national, regional and global regulatory frameworks that address EDCs by summarizing and comparing their characteristics including scope, criteria utilized, data needs and relevant processes used. This report would build on existing available online information, and key stakeholders would be consulted and requested to provide information.
 - ii) A third report would compile and provide an overview of the current knowledge on those chemicals already identified as EDCs and selected potential EDCs where there is enough scientific information and rigorous scientific assessments have been applied, including tables with data on production, uses, emission sources, fate and transport, possible exposure pathways, levels and trends in the environmental exposure, and adverse impacts on wildlife.

Ms. Alvarez kindly requested all participants to provide comments to the documents, UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3, which was circulated to the participants of the meeting prior to the online discussion.

12. Mr. Digangi said that the first report, the one subject to comments, was very important and reflected the agency responding to the significant number of countries that have expressed their interest in these topics during regional SAICM meetings and through resolutions. He was referring to the

regional consultations that took place in 2013 and 2014 in Latin America, Africa and Asia Pacific. His two general comments were the following:

- a) Mr. Digangi proposed to change the order of the reports: switch the second and the third report. He explained that the information of the third report was of great interest as this information had been requested in regional resolutions. Therefore, it would be better to present the third report before the second report.
 - b) Mr. DiGangi explained that IPCP did a very good job on the report, but it might be useful to think about including some of the Stockholm Convention (SC) considerations and outcomes in the report. He explained that many of the substances listed under the SC were also mentioned or listed in the UNEP/WHO report entitled “State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals -2012”, and for governments that were new to the topic of EDCs, it might be useful to have a link to a treaty such as the Stockholm Convention, to which most countries in the world are parties to and acting towards its implementation.
13. Ms. Alvarez indicated that it was a good idea to make a linkage with the Stockholm Convention. The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) was already assessing the POPs characteristics of some chemicals and consideration from this expert group on these chemicals regarding being EDCs could be important.
 14. Ms. Bornman supported what Mr. Digangi had said about making a linkage with the Stockholm Convention. She mentioned that in relation to listing EDCs, UNEP and WHO had already accepted a list or approved a list with different chemicals and that list should be added to the discussion. The list was mentioned to be very important for developing countries. She also mentioned that any list or document on EDCs should be user friendly, as they could serve as basis for regulations and policies. She also provided one general comment about the use of legacy chemicals, including DDT. She explained that DDT was not a legacy chemical in South Africa, neither in some other African and developing countries as it was still being used for Malaria Vector Control.
 15. Ms. Marty asked for some more details about the Stockholm Convention concept that would be incorporated in the report.
 16. Mr. Digangi explained that 19 substances were already mentioned in the state of the science report, which were also listed in the Stockholm Convention and that for governments that were unfamiliar with EDCs topic, it would have a sense of similarity to deal with chemicals that they were already obligated to deal with under this treaty. He mentioned as example two substances, proposed for listing at the upcoming COP and also included in the “State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals -2012”: deca-BDE and Short-Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (SCCP). Furthermore he brought to the attention of the participants that dicofol and PFOA were currently under evaluation by the POPRC and also mentioned in “State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals - 2012”. He agreed with Ms. Bornman about the importance of highlighting the lists in the report.
 17. Ms. Marty explained that the list of EDCs could be larger than the number of chemicals under the SC. She argued that linking EDCs with the Stockholm Convention chemicals could lead to confusion. She also noted that listing of chemicals could vary from region to region, depending if they were under a risk assessment or hazard assessment process. It also would depend on the criteria used to select the EDCs. Therefore she suggested to start with the second report first, to give opportunities to the countries know about the different frameworks they could use, so then when the third report would be discussed, the countries would have an idea about which of the frameworks they could choose regarding EDCs.

18. Mr. Digangi stressed that not all POPs are EDCs and not all EDCs are POPs.
19. Ms. Tirchila said that it was a good proposal to change the title of the first report as suggested in paragraph 13 numeral I of the document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3, so the new title could reflect the content of the report. Her opinion regarding the order of the reports was that the second report was well placed where it was. She asked if the drafts of the two reports would be circulated before or after the meeting in Brazil.
20. Ms. Alvarez clarified that he report was expected to be ready by February 2017, but the aim was not to have them finalized by the SAICM intersessional meeting taking place in Brasilia early February 2017. A second draft was to be circulated for comments to the UN Environment Advisory Group on EDCs and also to the SAICM stakeholders.
21. Ms. Holmberg made some general comments on the language. Some words from the previous version, such as the word “classified”, should be changed to the word “categorized” or some other similar word. She also asked if this document was going to be sent for comments. She said that she would be happy to indicate those words that should be reconsidered.
Regarding the first report, she indicated the need to include a reference to the “State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals -2012” mentioned in paragraph 13 of document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3. This also linked to the discussion about the Stockholm Convention. It was very important to use this report in order to look at relevant chemicals because the universe of EDCs was mentioned to be huge in relation to POPs. She also mentioned that it was important to say that the POPRC addresses adverse effects and might they did not assess chemicals in relation to being EDCs. Nevertheless she found that, the link to the Stockholm Convention could be very relevant. Finally, she remarked that the order of the reports could go both ways.
22. Mr. Neumann, supported what Ms. Marty said, particularly about the order proposed for the reports. He said that it was important for countries that were currently preparing or looking for guidance on how they should regulate EDCs to understand and have an overview of what was happening in the rest of the world, especially in relation to legislation.
23. Ms. Alvarez, concluded that from what had been discussed that the members of the Advisory Group had agreed to move from the five reports originally planned to three reports. She also concluded that the change of the title of the first report was agreed as well as the approach for the three overview reports, as per the document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3.
Ms. Alvarez explained that the reports would be ready to be sent for comments at a very similar timing so it would not matter which report would come first. Regarding the comments on adding a reference to the Stockholm Convention, she stressed that the Convention parties should not be the ones to decide which chemicals were EDCs and which ones were not, but from what she heard mentioning the Stockholm Convention and its POPs Review Committee outcomes in the reports could be acceptable to the Advisory Group on EDCs. As mentioned by Ms. Holmberg, the state of the science should be the base.
24. Ms. Alvarez asked Ms. Holmberg to further elaborate on change of the language she indicated was needed.
25. Ms. Holmberg mentioned that the most important change should be made in paragraph 13, IV of the document UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.3, where it was written: “Those chemical that have been identified and *classified* ...” The word *classified* should either deleted or changed into *categorized*. She continued sharing a view on another issue in paragraph 9 of the document,

particularly on the sentence: “The report does not aim at providing a single list of globally endorsed EDCs”.

26. The potential link to substances covered in the State of the Science report 2012 was also discussed by the group.
27. Ms. Alvarez expressed that changing the word *classified* to *categorised* was more appropriate. Regarding paragraph 9, she said that it was important to highlight this sentence to be very clear that this was not one of the objectives.
28. Ms. Alvarez indicated that proceeded will be with three reports with approval of the Advisory Group, and that some issues linked to the Stockholm Convention could be highlighted.
29. Mr. Digangi remarked that time was a concern and that it was important to move forward.
30. Ms. Alvarez explained that March was being targeted to finish the awareness raising materials documents for the first comments within the Advisory Group. Then, the documents were going to be circulated to the general SAICM community. The idea was that the Advisory Group, as representative of the regions and other stakeholders, should circulate the documents among their contacts and provide some feedback. In a second round, likely in April, the documents shall be posted on the webpage.
31. Ms. Alvarez stressed once more that the first report was planned to be launched at the same moment as the others then the three overview reports could be seen in an integrated manner and revised accordingly. It was also highlighted that the EDCs Advisory Group was going to be consulted first and then public consultation was aimed for April 2017. The final drafts were expected to be ready by the EDCs Advisory Group face to face meeting.

VI. Opportunity to share information and comments

32. Ms. Alvarez, asked the participants if they could give some update about their activities, any relevant news plans or dates.
33. Ms. Bornman explained that although she was not speaking in the name of Africa, she said that Africa and mainly South Africa would rely heavily on newly developed EDCs documents and on the guidance from the European Union. She argued that this would also be true for other countries. In South Africa they had had a couple of meetings with their national steering committee, and some progress had been made. But she explained that developing countries, like South Africa, really would need the newly developed documents, as well as a list of chemicals and highlighted that the third report, which was about the production, emission on the wildlife, was of great importance to them.
34. Ms. Marty gave some updates from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), which had been working on essays, and other topics, but she mentioned that there was still a long way to go. She also informed the meeting participants that at that time there were many activities taking place regarding thyroid toxicity.
35. Ms. Wamai said that she worked for the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Kenya. She agreed with what Ms. Bornman said, that there was very little information on EDCs and therefore

the regions would rely heavily on the information coming from the developed countries. This added to what Mr. Digangi had said about the need for awareness raising materials.

36. Ms. Holmberg gave some updates about the ongoing work that was being done in the European context. She briefly elaborated on the criteria of biocides and pesticides and, she explained also that some guidance was going to be under development soon. She also explained the development of the EU strategy, in which the term *not toxic environment* was used. She confirmed the focus on thyroid toxicity also in the EU. She mentioned that ECHA/EFSA had started the guidance development for identification of EDCs and that criteria for EDCs had been proposed but still were being discussed and hence not endorsed in the EU. She added that an EU strategy for a non-toxic environment was expected in 2018. One of the goals of this strategy was to reduce the exposure to EDCs and to minimize to the risk of EDCs for vulnerable groups and the people.
37. Ms. Alvarez said that Canada had been doing a lot of work on EDCs activities. She referred to Annex 2 of the document SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.1/INF/3 where many activities that Canada was undertaking were listed.
38. Mr. Digangi posed a question to Canada. He noticed in the report, SAICM/ICCM.5/Bureau.1/INF/3, that some of the reports were marked as “Not suitable for Clearinghouse” and he wondered why that was.
39. Ms. Alvarez indicated that the answer could be given by e-mail by Canada.

VII. Upcoming activities: Face to face meeting

40. Ms. Alvarez explained that the face to face meeting was planned to be held on 2017, April 20 or 21, just before the BRS COPs in Geneva. Ms. Alvarez shared her computer screen with the meeting participants in order to show the provisional agenda⁵ for the face to face meeting, and explained that:
 - a) Items 1 to 4 were general items
 - b) The fifth item agenda referred to an update of UN Environment’s project on EDCs “Provision of Information on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals” and that the three reports were part of this project.
 - c) “The Terms of Reference of the UNEP Advisory Group on the Environmental Exposure and Impact of EDCs” was the following agenda item proposed for discussion. The need to revise these Terms of Reference was highlighted as well as the need to consider membership. The Advisory Group members, as per its terms of reference, could serve a maximum term of three years, and as the present Advisory Group was arriving to that limit, it would be necessary to have a selection of new members.
41. Ms. Holmberg asked if it would be possible to push down item number 4, to put it between items 6 and 7, in order to have more time during the meeting for items 5 and 6. She also asked if would be possible to have a confirmation as soon as possible about the face to face meeting dates.

⁵ UNEP/AG/EDC/3/2016 online 1.4

42. Ms. Marty and Mr. Digangi agreed with Ms. Holmberg suggestion, and highlighted the importance of giving more time for discussion on items 6 and 7.

43. Ms. Alvarez indicated that the documents for discussion would be circulated before the face to face meeting in order for all participants to be able to discuss and bring in considerations from their constituencies during the meeting. Ms. Alvarez suggested to have either another online meeting or discussion via e-mail in order to finish the documents in time.

The dates for the face to face meeting would be confirmed by UN Environment at the earliest.

Finally, Ms. Alvarez mentioned that UN and other agencies, including WHO, were working on a GEF project. This document was not circulated prior to the meeting, as it was still work in progress. The project had an overarching objective, and covered many issues, mainly Emerging Policy Issues. The outcome of component 3 as per that moment was: “Improve capacity for environmental risk assessment and knowledge of baseline impacts and policy for EDCs, EPPP, and nanotechnologies in developing countries”. The document once ready was to be shared with the Advisory Group. Ms. Alvarez requested to please not quote anything related to it, because changes to the document could still be made.

VIII. Other issues

44. Ms. Alvarez thanked to all the participants for their inputs and closed the online meeting.