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**Governing Council
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**Twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**
Nairobi, 18–22 February 2013
Items 4 (a) and (f) of the provisional agenda*
**Policy issues: state of the environment;
environment and development**

**Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals
and wastes cluster: implementation of Governing Council
decisions 26/12 and SS.XII/5**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report provides information on the progress in the implementation of Governing Council decisions 26/12 and SS.XII/5 on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster.

* UNEP/GC.27/1.

I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. The Governing Council may wish to consider the adoption of a decision along the lines suggested by the Executive Director. The suggested action will be submitted separately to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in support of its preparation of draft decisions.

II. Consultative process

2. In its decision 26/12, and as recalled in decision SS.XII/5, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term.

3. In line with decision 26/12 and with a view to ensuring that relevant input was made available in a timely manner, the secretariat of UNEP invited comments on the initial report of the Executive Director on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster.¹ Responses were received from 10 Governments and the European Union.

4. The comments received ranged from specific comments on the report to broader strategic and policy considerations. A number of them underlined the importance of linking the implementation of decision 26/12 to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, and to initiatives pertinent to the consultations on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term, in particular those related to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes, the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, and the processes for the UNEP Global Chemicals Outlook and a study on the cost of inaction.

5. The secretariat analysed the comments with a view to presenting a discussion document that would set out, in a balanced manner, the key issues pertaining to the sound management of chemicals and wastes and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination within the cluster. The document will also suggest possible processes for identifying and responding to emerging chemicals and wastes issues of global concern in recognition of the view of some Governments that the existing arrangements for sound chemicals and wastes management have developed in an ad hoc manner and in response to specific issues. Those Governments are of the opinion that such an approach has gaps and may be inadequate for dealing with new or emerging issues.

6. In preparation for the first meeting of that consultative process, which was tentatively scheduled to be held in May 2012, after the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the secretariat held informal consultations by teleconference and approached possible co-chairs for the consultative process with the aim of seeking further guidance, as appropriate, towards ensuring that the secretariat facilitated and supported an inclusive, country-driven process. In particular, the secretariat sought further guidance from the co-chairs on background documents to be prepared for the first meeting; discussed the efforts required to ensure a country-driven process; discussed the format, venue and dates of the first meeting; considered outreach related to the process; and explored options for extrabudgetary resources for the conduct of the process.

7. On the basis of the outcome of the consultations with the co-chairs, the secretariat took the first steps towards organizing the first meeting using available extrabudgetary resources.

8. Regrettably, owing to the busy international agenda in the field of sustainable development as well as in the area of chemicals and wastes since the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, it has not proved possible to identify suitable dates to convene the first meeting of the consultative process.

9. The secretariat considers that the first suitable dates for the proposed meeting are 6 and 7 February 2013, and it is taking the steps necessary to organize the meeting on those dates, including by again identifying co-chairs for the inclusive, country-driven process. The outcome of the meeting will be submitted for the consideration of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment at its twenty-seventh session as an addendum to the present report.

¹ UNEP/GC.26/16.

10. In the light of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the progress made in enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster among the chemicals- and wastes-related conventions combined with the progress made in other processes on chemicals and wastes, including the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes, the secretariat will reiterate its invitation to Governments to provide further input to the country-driven consultative process on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster in advance of the planned meeting.
