



Distr.: General
20 September 2017

Original: English



**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Third session**

Nairobi, 4–6 December 2017

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Performance of the programme of work and budget,
including implementation of the resolutions of the
Environment Assembly**

**Progress made pursuant to resolution 2/7 on sound
management of chemicals and waste**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The international management of chemicals and waste is at a crossroads as the production, generation, trade, use and disposal of chemicals and waste continue to grow and the demand for products containing chemicals, as well as the generation of waste, increases. While significant progress has been made on specific chemicals and wastes addressed through multilateral environmental agreements and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, stakeholders have recognized that renewed and enhanced commitment and innovative action are required to address the growing challenges.

In its resolution 2/7 on sound management of chemicals and waste, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme called on member States to reflect the sound management of chemicals and waste as a priority in their relevant sector policies. It also requested the Executive Director to coordinate with relevant international stakeholders and support member States on policies and actions for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The present report describes progress on and issues related to the implementation of the resolution.

* UNEP/EA.3/1.

I. Background

1. In its resolution 2/7 on sound management of chemicals and waste, the United Nations Environment Assembly called on member States to reflect the sound management of chemicals and waste as a priority in their relevant sector policies. It also requested the Executive Director to coordinate with relevant international stakeholders and support member States on policies and actions for the sound management of chemicals and waste. The present report describes progress on and issues related to the implementation of the resolution.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/7

2. The United Nations Environment Programme, pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it by the Environment Assembly in resolution 2/7, has catalysed and implemented a range of actions. Highlights include the following:

(a) The intersessional process on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 has gained significant momentum, and the first meeting of the process was held in February 2017 in Brazil;

(b) The Minamata Convention on Mercury entered into force on 16 August 2017, and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in September 2017. Ratification and implementation activities have continued to be supported through the interim secretariat of the Convention and the Environment Programme Global Mercury Partnership in more than 100 countries. The *Global Mercury Waste Assessment* report was published at the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties on 24 September 2017;

(c) The Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening is currently supporting Argentina, Benin, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania in their efforts to manage chemicals and waste. Additional countries will be selected for funding by the Executive Board at its third meeting, scheduled for December 2017;¹

(d) Further guidance to support the development of national legislation frameworks and institutions for the sound management of chemicals is being developed with the support of an expert group;

(e) Focused capacity development continues with respect to lead in paint, supporting legislation and standard-setting in all countries by 2020, including through the development of a model law on lead paint. Capacity-building support on lead in batteries has commenced in the African region;

(f) Reports on endocrine-disrupting chemicals and environmentally persistent organic pollutants are being prepared and will be issued by 2018;

(g) A steering committee has been established to guide research and inform the publication of *Global Chemicals Outlook II* by the end of 2018. The document is expected to generate knowledge and policy insights concerning key areas of chemicals management relevant to the implementation of the chemicals and waste dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including linkages on the chemicals and waste interface;

(h) In the context of the 2030 Agenda, a project on chemicals and waste indicators relating to the Sustainable Development Goals has commenced in three pilot countries. A report for policymakers on the Goals and their chemicals and waste dimension is being drafted by the Environment Programme and is scheduled for review in early 2018;

(i) The Global Environment Facility has approved a full-sized project supporting the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, focusing on emerging policy issues and knowledge management. The project is expected to start in early 2018;

(j) In the area of sustainable chemistry, stakeholders have submitted to the Environment Programme information on a range of best practices that will inform a summary report on the topic in 2018;

(k) The Environment Programme has initiated work on sustainable chemistry for chemicals in products and production, initially focusing on the advancement of low-toxicity housing development;

(l) Efforts have been scaled up to achieve progress in meeting the targets included in the programme of work for the period 2016–2017;

¹ The report of the Executive Board of the Special Programme is presented in document UNEP/EA.3/INF/10.

(m) The Environment Programme has supported the development of national strategies and action plans for integrated waste management using a holistic approach in four countries, and has initiated support in eight additional countries;

(n) The Environment Programme has supported the development of city-level strategies and action plans for integrated waste management using a holistic approach in six cities, and has initiated support in three additional cities;

(o) The Environment Programme enhanced the availability of information on the environmentally sound management of waste through the publication of a thematic outlook for mountainous regions in December 2016 and regional waste management outlooks for Asia, Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean in September 2017. Waste management outlooks for Africa, West Asia and small island developing States are under development and are expected to be completed in 2018.

III. Recommendations and suggested action

3. Collaboration with countries and stakeholders over the past year has revealed a number of challenges in the processes of enacting policy reform for the sound management of chemicals and waste and addressing specific risks posed by chemicals. Ultimately, replacing specific chemicals and addressing waste-related challenges have cost implications and affect economic development, including job security and creation. Thus, enhanced action can be expected only if safe alternatives are available and are introduced without significant economic implications. This also means that efforts to create incentives and advance innovation and entrepreneurship in all countries, including developing countries, need to be scaled up. The Global Chemicals Outlook and Global Waste Management Outlook reports are expected to provide insights into these issues.

4. The United Nations Environment Assembly may wish:

(a) To recognize the importance of, and scale up action to address, existing emerging policy issues identified under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;

(b) To expand efforts to promote broader stakeholder and sectoral participation in advancing the sound management of chemicals and waste, including in particular the role of industry and downstream users;

(c) To encourage the development of national chemicals and waste management strategies within broader national processes to address pollution;

(d) To strengthen support and funding for capacity development in terms of basic chemicals and waste management systems, including the enhancement of the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening;

(e) To encourage the identification of pollution and chemicals-related hotspots to protect vulnerable groups and the environment through the establishment of national monitoring systems, including through pollutant release and transfer registers and biomonitoring programmes;

(f) To encourage the implementation of labelling schemes, in particular the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, as tools for supporting safe chemicals management and helping to prevent chemical and waste pollution;

(g) To consider further action to address all exposure to lead, complementing action on lead in petrol, paint and batteries;

(h) To consider further action to assess and address the impacts of chemical pollution associated with agricultural production systems, including pesticides, fertilizers, pharmaceutical pollutants and other relevant chemicals.