Terms of reference for the Issue Management Group on

United Nations and Sound Management of Chemicals: *Coordinating delivery for member states*

A. Background

1. The 19th senior officials meeting of the Environment Management Group (EMG) held in New York on 19 September 2013 considered an issue paper on how the United Nations system could more coherently support countries in achieving sound management of chemicals. (See box 1 for the decision of the meeting).

Box1. Excerpt from the report of the 19th senior officials meeting on a "addressing New issues"

1. The senior officials agree with the importance of raising the profile of sound chemicals management within all relevant organizations of the UN System. Given the IOMC is the established coordinating mechanism among the UN family and OECD, the senior officials agree to invite the IOMC at their forthcoming November meeting to examine the draft issues paper and elaborate the rationale and the draft terms of reference for a potential IMG in this area, bearing in mind any potential duplications with the existing mechanisms. On the basis of this, the EMG will make a decision on whether to establish the IMG.

2. Chemicals management has been high on the international political agenda since 1972 at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) when pollution from toxic and dangerous substances was a central issue. It was specifically addressed in 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with the adoption of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 and again at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 where the 2020 goal of producing and using chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant effects on human health and the environment was established in the Plan of Implementation of the Johannesburg Summit.

3. In response to the political attention to sound chemicals management, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) was established in 1995. The purpose of the Programme is to promote coordination of the policies and activities pursued by the Participating Organizations, jointly and separately, to achieve the sound management of chemicals in relation to human health and the environment.

4. The IOMC now has nine Participating Organizations that collaborate to coordinate in the capacity building, technical assistance and institutional strengthening programmes they provide to support country efforts to implement national frameworks for the sound management of chemicals. The Participating Organizations are: FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, World Bank

and OECD. The Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are regularly invited for discussions with IOMC during regular IOMC meetings held biannually.

5. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was adopted in 2006. The overarching goal for SAICM was to achieve the 2020 goal through a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder initiative to protect human health and the environment, SAICM provides a unique policy framework to achieve the 2020 goal. Following the adoption of SAICM, each of the IOMC organizations endorsed or otherwise formally acknowledged support for SAICM.

6. Countries renewed their commitment to address chemical (and waste) issues as a key priority area in the outcome document "The future we want" of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. The Rio+20 outcome document requires a renewed institutional commitment by intergovernmental agencies and international organizations to the goals of sustainable development.

7. The third International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3) in 2012 requested the SAICM Secretariat in UNEP to develop overall orientation and guidance including some concrete elements, to facilitate achievement of the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals and provide further guidance towards approaching the goal. The overall orientation and guidance should be further discussed at regional meetings and the Open-ended Working Group and for possible consideration at the fourth session of the Conference.

B. Composition, function and responsibilities

8. The objective of the issue management group (IMG) is to raise the priority given to chemicals management in the UN system, promote integration of chemicals management issues in broader context of economic and social development planning and ensure additional synergies between the UN organizations in supporting countries in activities to achieve the 2020 goal.

9. The IMG for United Nations and Sound Management of Chemicals is composed of focal points nominated by EMG members and is open to observers from non UN entities whose knowledge, activities or expertise will be relevant to and useful for to the work of the IMG. The meetings of the IMG will be organised by the EMG Secretariat and for each meeting a chair or co- chairs will be selected among the IMG members. The IMG will meet mostly through electronic means including video-audio conference. A few physical/in person meetings of the IMG will be organized close to IOMC meetings to discuss or agree on strategic issues.

10. The IMG shall organize its work to undertake the following main functions and responsibilities, taking into account relevant interagency and intergovernmental processes:

a. Map out different agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system with activities and initiatives that might assist in the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals;
b. Analyse where and how the expertise of different agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system can contribute to supporting countries in achieving the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals;
c. Provide recommendations on how to achieve additional synergies between different agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system with activities and initiatives that might assist in the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals;
d. Consider how the findings of IMG can contribute to the "Overall Orientation and Guidance towards the 2020 Goal" which is under development by the SAICM Secretariat;
e. Develop and disseminate joint and consistent messaging on the measures needed to support the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals, for example through a progress report that can be provided to the SAICM Open Ended Working Group planned for December 2014, the 4th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management tentatively scheduled for late 2015 and other relevant fora; and
f. In close consultation with the IOMC, prepare a set of key composite targets and indicators in the area of sound chemicals and hazardous waste management which could serve as a joint input by the UN system to support the deliberation of the intergovernmental process on the negotiations of the post 2015 outcome document. This contribution should be prepared by September 2014 for consideration of the 20th EMG senior officials [1].
g. Report to, and respond to the senior officials meeting of the EMG on the outcome of its work.

[1] Proposed by the Chair of the EMG for consideration of the EMG members