The United Nations Environment Assembly

PP1. Recalling resolution 4/8, and stressing the urgent need to “strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels to support and promote science-based local, national, regional and global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020”,

PP2. Recalling also resolution 5/2, which approved UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2022-2025 with its sub-programme on chemicals and pollution action, alongside those on nature and climate action, and its promotion of sound science and information- and knowledge-sharing, ¹

PP3. Welcomes the report prepared by the Executive Director in cooperation with the member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals “An assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste”,


¹ UNEA/EA.5/3/Rev.1
management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, “Right to science in the context of toxic substances”,

PP5. Acknowledging that the availability of advice can enable more timely action to minimise and prevent the adverse effects of chemicals, waste and pollution on human health and the environment, can promote sustainable and green chemistry solutions, and can improve human well-being and contribute to prosperity for all,

PP6. Convinced that a science-policy panel could support United Nations agencies, global Multilateral Agreements, other international instruments, such as the beyond 2020 instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste, governments and the private sector in their work to take action on chemicals, waste and pollution by providing authoritative, independent, credible, inclusive, policy-relevant scientific advice on issues,

OP1. Agrees that a science-policy panel should be established to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution,

OP2. Agrees that the principal functions of the panel should be to:

(i) undertake horizon scanning, that is a systematic examination of information to identify potential threats, risks, emerging issues and opportunities; and identify issues of concern and propose evidence-based options for solutions to address them, where possible;

(ii) undertake assessments on the character and scale of particular issues, where appropriate and possible, potential solutions, and generate outputs that inform all actors, to support them in addressing the issue; and

(iii) provide up-to-date and relevant information, catalyse scientific research, facilitate communication between scientists and policymakers, explain and disseminate findings for different audience and raise public awareness.

3 A/HRC/48/61
OP3. *Further agrees* that the panel should be an autonomous intergovernmental body; and that the ultimate authority shall rest with Governments to ensure the programme of work delivers policy-relevant evidence from which the global community are able to agree conclusions,

OP4. *Decides to* establish an ad hoc open-ended working group of Governments and regional economic integration organisations, which is open to UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations including those who are members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and stakeholder representatives, with the terms of reference set out in the Annex to the present resolution,

OP5. *Agrees* that the working group should meet up to four times if necessary, and should complete its work by the end of 2024,

OP6. *Recognises* the important work of members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, other relevant UN agencies, and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the International Conference on Chemical Management (ICCM), encourages these organizations to continue their scientific work making full use of their expertise, and invites these organizations to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals, waste and pollutants through the establishment of a science-policy panel,

OP7. *Requests* the Executive Director to cooperate closely with the relevant secretariats of chemicals, waste and the pollution-related global Multilateral Agreements, and other relevant international organizations and bodies such as the World Health Organization and other members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, to ensure their involvement in the preparation of the first meeting and encourage further consideration of their roles by their respective governing bodies,

OP8. *Requests* the Executive Director to convene a first meeting of the open-ended working group, and requests the Executive Director to invite the World Health Organization (WHO) to play a role as appropriate.
OP9. Invites Governments and others in a position to do so to provide extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of this resolution, in particular to enable the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the open-ended working group,

OP10. Requests the Executive Director to provide a secretariat for the open-ended working group and to prepare the analytical and summary reports necessary for its work.

Annex

Terms of Reference of the Open-ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel to support action on chemicals, waste and pollution

The working group shall prepare a proposal for the establishment of the panel, making recommendations on:

(i) the institutional design of the panel, including arrangements for and membership of the plenary as supreme governing body of the panel, and for discharging management oversight of the work through a bureau or steering committee;

(ii) the mandate, paying due attention to mandates of existing bodies, in order to achieve optimal coordination, to create synergies and avoid duplication;

(iii) the relationship with the international policy-making actors involved with the sound management of chemicals and waste;

(iv) the processes for determining the work program and for executing it;

(v) arrangements for identifying and engaging with experts;

(vi) procedures for reviewing and adoption of reports and assessments to be produced by the panel;
(vii) arrangements for providing secretariat support for the panel, hosted administratively by the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation but placed under the political authority of the panel;

(viii) proposals for the financing of the work of the panel;

(ix) draft rules of procedure;

(x) an indicative budget for the panel;

(xi) any other issues which must be addressed in order to complete the proposal.

The open-ended working group should take account of the need to ensure that the panel:

(i) can deliver outputs which are policy relevant, without being policy prescriptive;

(ii) is interdisciplinary, ensuring appropriate contributions from experts with different disciplinary expertise, and with geographical, regional and gender balance;

(iii) has procedures which will ensure the authority, credibility, legitimacy, and transparency of its work;

(iv) undertakes work which is complementary to and does not duplicate or compromise the work of the UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations including those who are members of the inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, and the expert subsidiary bodies of global Multilateral Agreements active in the field of the sound management of chemicals, and waste and pollution;

(v) coordinates with other science-policy bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), drawing on the
examples and experience of those panels and other relevant science-policy bodies;

(vi) can address potential conflicts of interest, and the use of commercially sensitive information;

(vii) has the flexibility to respond to the needs of the community and evolve to meet the functions identified;

(viii) is cost-effective, with the leanest structure consistent with achieving a high impact.