

**SAICM/UCT
Chemicals and the Sustainable Development Goals
Community of Practice**

Discussion Forum Guide

Please read the questions and resources below to prepare for this discussion!

Title	Promoting youth engagement with different stakeholders in chemicals and waste
Date	26th May 2021
Time	14:00 – 15:30 pm (GMT+2)
Facilitator	Prof. Andrea Rother, Univ. of Cape Town
Presenters	Dickson Ho (UNEPMGCY), Emiel Dobbelaar (UNEPMGCY), Leselle Vincent (UNEPMGCY), Vittoria Magrini (SAICM), and Marijana Todorovic (SAICM)
WebEx registration link	https://unep.webex.com/unep/j.php%3FRGID=raa9599c9be257d8423a5d379e44bd21b

Two steps are required to join this discussion:

1) Sign up to the CoP, if you have not done so previously, at:
<https://saicmknowledge.org/community>

Should you require assistance or have questions, contact: uctcops@outlook.com

2) Register for the 26th of May WebEx discussion at:
<https://unep.webex.com/unep/j.php%3FRGID=raa9599c9be257d8423a5d379e44bd21b>

We encourage you also to join the CSDG CoP WhatsApp group by clicking on this link:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/BKTKGwt5cnNCgG9BOzYK1i>

Should you **NOT be able to join the discussion** but still wish to contribute please **click the link below** and fill out the Form with your **contributions**:
<https://forms.office.com/r/WuKZiPYsxB>

Discussion Format:

- This is not a Webinar, but rather a platform for members to discuss the questions presented in the chat room of **WebEx** after an oral presentation.
- The discussion presenter/s will briefly provide a verbal introduction to the topic and the questions listed in this discussion guide.
- Three questions will be posted during the 1 ½ hour discussion. The presenter/s will address questions and comments posted by members in the chat room and participants are encouraged to respond to each other as well.
- All are welcome to join the discussion which will be held in English. Feel free to write in another language if you are struggling with English and members will assist where possible.

This activity is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on *Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)*.

PRESENTERS BIOSKETCH



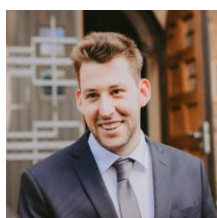
Dickson Ho

Dickson is the facilitator for the Chemicals and Waste Platform for the Major Group for Children and Youth of UNEP. He has a postgraduate degree in International Development, Environment and Sustainability, and undergraduate degrees in Science (Chemistry) and Education (secondary). Additional to this role, Dickson is also a founder and core working group member of Australian Youth for International Climate Engagement partnering with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on building youth-government relations around climate policy nationally and internationally. Previously, he has been an intern of the SAICM Secretariat and a high school Teacher of Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and Science for 6 years in Australia.



Leselle Vincent

Leselle is pursuing a MPA in Development Practice with a specialization in International Organizations from Columbia University, and hopes to contribute to global sustainable development and environmental resilience for vulnerable communities. Prior to starting this program, Leselle worked at the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean where she supported the development and execution of projects to assist regional governments and private sector stakeholders with implementing international chemicals and waste Conventions. Earlier, in 2016, she graduated with a BSc in Environmental Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.



Emiel Dobbelaar

Emiel is a PhD Student at TU Kaiserslautern (Germany), chair of the German Young Chemists Network (JCF) of the German Chemical Society (GDCh) and executive board member of the International Younger Chemists Network (IYCN). He utilizes his network and his responsibilities in international and public relations within these youth organizations to establish and promote engagement for sustainability in the young divisions of chemical societies. Within JCF, he founded a "team sustainability" in 2019 where he initiated and lead multiple global projects in close collaboration with the International Younger Chemists Network (IYCN), the European Young Chemists Network (EYCN) and the International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre (ISC₃) in the context of sustainable development and sustainability awareness.



Vittoria Magrini

Vittoria is an intern at the SAICM Secretariat. She recently graduated in an MSc in Global Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where she developed a strong interest in environmental politics and governance. In 2019 she earned a BSc in International Relations from the University of Sussex, Brighton. Prior to working as an intern at the SAICM Secretariat, Vittoria worked as a researcher for an international NGO based in Washington and Geneva that focused on social justice, knowledge governance and access to health.



Marijana Todorovic

Marijana is an environmental policy specialist working with the SAICM Secretariat since 1 ½ years. She holds an undergraduate degree in political science and a postgraduate degree in environmental policy and planning. Before being employed with UNEP, she worked as a policy officer in an NGO on issues related to the environment and sustainable development. Within the SAICM Secretariat, Marijana gives policy support

to the SAICM beyond 2020 process and is responsible for stakeholder relationships, including youth engagement.

DISCUSSION INTRODUCTION (14h00 – 14h15 CET)

Dickson Ho, Marijana Todorovic

Youth is more than an age range. Young people make up more than 50% of the global population and they are vastly diverse! Whether they are navigating the 21st century's new work order in a post-COVID, increasingly automated and globalised gig economy, supporting their families and communities with establishing sustainable practices, fighting to increase awareness of growing inequality and wealth gaps or struggling with the physical and mental health issues that come with living a highly digital and hyperconnected world, the youth around the world face a very wide range of challenges on many fronts. The challenges of chemicals and waste are not an exception this!

During the Youth Environment Assembly (February 2021), 166 participants aged between 16-35 from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions were consulted regarding the state of the youth and how chemicals and waste impact them. This consultation process continued with the formation of the Chemicals and Waste Platform of the UNEPMGCY. From these consultations, three key insights were found. 1) There is an overall feeling of powerlessness among the youth to change their situations regarding the negative impacts of chemicals and waste. 2) There are disproportionately more negative impacts of chemicals and waste on youth in developing nations than those in developed nations. 3) There are large data, knowledge, and capacity gaps among the youth regarding chemicals and waste. Chemicals and waste impact the lives of each and every youth around the world. Therefore, meaningful youth engagement around chemicals and waste is an important topic.

There is no one-size-fits-all method for meaningful youth engagement, however, there have been some frameworks and development in this space that can help guide discourse around meaningful youth engagement, today we will discuss some of these. The Chemicals and Waste Platform of UNEPMGCY hopes to act as the bridge between decision makers and youth to foster cooperation towards meaningful youth engagement in chemicals and waste. Our goal is to one day see youth become an established body and stakeholder in discussions around chemicals and waste. Today's Communities of Practise discussions will be based around overcoming barriers to youth engagement, understanding the benefits of youth engagement and finding ways to implement meaningful youth engagement strategies.

QUESTION 1 (14h15 – 14h40 CET)

Emiel Dobbelaar

Background information:

The current youth is the best educated generation in history and has realized the threats that await if humanity does not become more sustainable. Therefore, more and more young people want to engage in and contribute to global dialogues and policy making, especially when the decisions of today majorly affect *their* future (impressively demonstrated by the “Fridays for Future” movement). Moreover, young people make up over half of the human population and will inherit the world and its challenges. Thus, it would only make sense to embrace youth engagement and actively involve young people and their opinions in decision-making processes. However, this is still not the case and even when young people are present at the table, they may not truly be involved in shaping the final outcomes of the discussions and are often just used as tokens. It stands to reason why the youth is not being involved despite high education and motivation and how the situation can be improved towards meaningful youth participation in a timely manner.

Question 1: What do you think are the barriers that prevent youth engagement in the chemicals and waste dialogue? How can we overcome these?

Resources/Information for the Discussion:

- Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation - From Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf
- Hart, R. (2008). Chapter 2: Stepping back from “The ladder”: Reflections on a model of participatory work with children. Sage. <https://bit.ly/3uWYEJJ>
- Women Deliver. (2016). Engage Youth: A Discussion Paper on Meaningful Youth Engagement. https://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Meaningful_Youth_Engagement_Discussion-Paper.pdf

QUESTION 2 (14h40 – 15h05 CET)

Leselle Vincent

Background information:

Recognizing the value that youth engagement can offer to the chemicals and waste dialogue is dependent on understanding the innovative, creative, and transformative role that youth throughout the world can play. Identifying and supporting mechanisms for youth engagement and involvement at both national and international levels can be beneficial to the youth themselves by providing leadership and practical experience. It will also positively impact governments, organizations, and other relevant stakeholders by adding new perspectives and ideas for consideration in negotiations on environmental, chemicals and waste, and sustainability agendas nationally and internationally. Promoting meaningful youth engagement is important for advancing sustainable development objectives. Youth inclusion in chemicals and waste management mechanisms could also support improved communication of the challenges and solutions through tools such as social media and facilitate awareness raising on how global citizens could contribute to change for a greener, more sustainable and inclusive future.

Question 2: Why should youth be included in the chemicals and waste discussion? What are the benefits for your government or organisation from engaging with youth?

Resources/Information for the Discussion:

- United Nations Youth Strategy (2018) 'Youth 2030 – Working with and for young people' https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf
- United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY) <https://www.unmgcy.org/>
- Why Youth Participation is Key, Jahkini Bisselink TEDx Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOpqMWj25AE>

QUESTION 3 (15h05 – 15h30 CET)

Vittoria Magrini

Background information:

Youth are already getting involved on their own, and some initiatives are slowly reaching the attention of policy makers. However, only achieving such attention through a bottom-up approach may not lead to meaningful participation any time soon. Therefore, a top-down approach should also be targeted, whereby governments, policy makers and institutions actively seek and reach out to existing youth initiatives and organizations to determine ways that they could effectively support the youth as well as opportunities for the youth to contribute to national and international efforts.

At the international level, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) represents a clear example of institutionalized, integrated, and meaningful youth engagement in the negotiations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Their work focuses on, for instance, implementing global campaigns on biodiversity and publishing policy proposals for a just Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (resource 1). In the chemical space, on the other hand, the young divisions of chemical societies have recently proven to be a highly educated and motivated young asset. The German Young Chemists Network (JCF), for example, has kicked-off many projects becoming an international player in the promotion of sustainability awareness at the international level through the active collaboration with governments, intergovernmental organisations, think tanks and other youth groups (resource 2). Lately, the African continent has also seen a rise in and empowerment of youth voices, not only in multilateral processes (e.g., on climate change discourse), but also by engaging at the national and local levels where most action is needed (resource 3).

Question 3: How can youth be meaningfully engaged in the chemicals and waste management dialogue at the national and international levels? What role would they play?

Resources/Information for the Discussion:

- Global Youth Biodiversity Network (1) <https://www.gybn.org/our-work>
- Sustainability in Education (2) <https://jcf.io/en/organization/teams/team-sustainability>
- African Youth Voices (3) <https://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/Commentary/African-youth-voices-environmental-discourse-Nnabagereka/689364-5607884-format-xhtml-rhm4ltz/index.html>