

# JOIN NOW THE NEW COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON CHEMICALS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Organized by the SAICM Secretariat and the University of Cape Town



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## Discussion 3 Digest

### Topic of Discussion: Accelerating the implementation of SDG 12.4

In 2015, world leaders adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. SDG target 12.4 specifically speaks to the need for sound management of chemicals and waste: *12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.* This and other internationally agreed targets, including those under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), point to the urgent need to protect people and the planet from pollution. In 2019, the UN Environment Assembly recognized the implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” as a vehicle to take urgent action on pollution (UNEA resolution 4/21). Chemicals use and management play a major role, not only in avoiding and reducing harmful exposure of people and the environment, but also in enabling circularity, enhancing non-toxic recycling and developing sustainable alternatives for polluting products and processes. The objective of this discussion was to explore how the implementation of sound management of chemicals and waste can be accelerated.

#### ABOUT THE PRESENTER

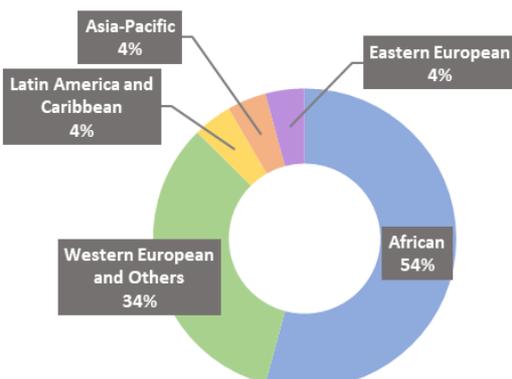


**Tessa Goverse** is a Senior Programme Officer at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). She coordinates UNEP’s Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality subprogramme from the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. With over 25 years of research, project and programme management experience in the area of environment and sustainable development, she worked on a wide range of issues, including strengthening of the science-policy interface, environmental assessment and emerging issues, gender and environment, sound management of chemicals and waste, marine litter and other forms of pollution. She was deeply involved in the development of the implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” and the formulation and implementation of UNEP’s Medium-term Strategy for 2018-2021. She is currently supporting the development of UNEP’s next strategy for 2022-2025 and the associated work programmes. Before joining UNEP, she worked on various international research projects on waste management, technology development and life cycle analysis. With a Masters of Science in biology (ecology and ecotoxicology) and a Ph.D. degree in industrial innovation and climate change from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, she has a strong multidisciplinary background in environmental science and sustainable development.

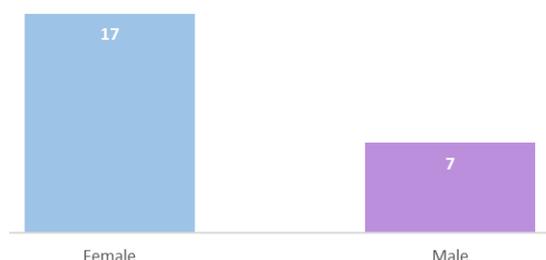
#### DISCUSSION 3 ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN

TOTAL ATTENDEES FOR DISCUSSION 3: 24

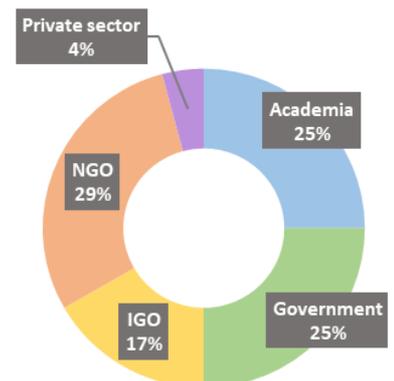
##### Regional representation



##### Gender representation



##### Sector representation



Key:  
IGO – Intergovernmental organisation  
NGO – Non-governmental organisation

## Chemicals and SDGs Community of Practice Discussion 3 Summary and looking ahead

1. A key discussion point was the need to **align regulations between different government departments** and to have **inter-ministerial collaboration**. This echoes the Global Chemicals Outlook II (GCO II) action points I and II (see references below) and speaks to a need for **policy coherence at the national level**. It was highlighted that **industry needs to enhance transparency** and that responsibility needs to be taken throughout the life cycle process when considering chemicals. In addition to this, **using science as a way of further assessing progress on indicators and targets** was also a suggestion. Further comments were made stating that it would be good to know why SDGs are not being achieved and where there are barriers to achieving progress. Overall, it was felt that **more involvement of community members** within society and **engagement of important stakeholders** would be integral to achieving these goals.
2. Another key point was that the **12.4 indicators could be more ambitious in measuring impacts** rather than **assessing management structures with governments and ministries**. This could be done by having a complimentary process while developing targets and indicators to ensure indicators are related to the target and goal and are measurable for progress sake. There was a very clear initial response stating that the **indicators of target 12.4 are not sufficient to reflect on sound chemicals and waste management** but also recognition that there is more out there that can be looked at for measuring this progress beyond the current indicators.
3. There was recognition that these **SDGs will not be achieved without chemicals** and that the **cross-linkages between these goals cannot be ignored**. Further to this, it was mentioned that there is **little awareness of chemicals in other frameworks** and that side events should be done to create more awareness of how chemicals can impact frameworks like biodiversity, climate change and water. To **strengthen linkages between goals at an international level**, suggestions were made to **strengthen voluntary agreements**, like SAICM, by having clear action plans that will have mandatory requirements for those who partake in the agreements. Suggestions to **accelerate linkages at national level included convening committees** on specific targets to discuss further linkages on indicators for these targets. A cautionary note was made to **avoid duplication of relevant targets and indicators across frameworks** to ensure there is no burden of reporting placed on already resource burdened stakeholders. It was stated that we need to **be efficient in how we invest in data collection** and the resources required for this and so multi-purpose indicators are helpful in avoiding burden of reporting.

## ANNEX

### DETAILED SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION 3:

**Disclaimer:** The information in this digest represents the opinions of members participating from different stakeholder groups expressed during the discussion. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the opinion or the stated policy of the United Nations Environment Programme, the SAICM Secretariat, the GEF or UCT, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

### **THE DISCUSSION WAS STRUCTURED AROUND THREE QUESTIONS AND THE KEY DISCUSSION INPUTS FROM PARTICIPANTS ARE PRESENTED UNDER EACH:**

#### Q1. What do we need to do differently to meet SDG target 12.4 that embodies this goal?

<b>CAMEROON</b> (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All social layers must be involved in the implementation process (young people, women, indigenous people, etc).</li> <li>- More projects must be developed in favour of or involving the vulnerable layer such as the women.</li> </ul>
<b>GERMANY</b> (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministries must work together and increase their engagement.</li> <li>- Industry should increase transparency along throughout the life cycle and towards consumers and authorities.</li> <li>- NGOs could pressure the government.</li> <li>- Sometimes national action plans involving all stakeholders help to achieve better cooperation among ministries.</li> <li>- According to the Dubai Declaration no information concerning health and environment can fall under CBI, therefore hazardous chemicals should be disclosed.</li> </ul>
<b>KENYA</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problem here is that it is simply written in papers and onboarded by major players, such as international agencies like SAICM, UNEP, and other international agreements institutions like the BRS</li> <li>- It has not yet been well internalized at the grassroots level</li> <li>- Through good education policy it can be integrated in the education curricular, so that it can be well received right from childhood education.</li> </ul>
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is key is to be clear about what has not worked and why.</li> </ul>
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b> (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First ensure that all regulations are aligned between the different government departments as this can hamper the delivery on the SDG goals.</li> <li>- Investigate why the delivery of the goals could not be achieved - other than conflicting legislation and mandates in government</li> <li>- The first prize would be a one-stop-shop for chemicals management.</li> <li>- In South Africa the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Affairs see empty chemical containers differently (i.e. Agricultural chemical containers are seen as hazardous, while Environmental chemical containers are not seen as hazardous and their legislation is conflicting).</li> <li>- An additional problem in SA is getting the pesticide industry to take responsibility for the chemicals throughout the lifecycle and legislation is not forcing them to as the extended producer responsibility is not legislated.</li> </ul>
<b>TOGO</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More collaboration is needed between academics and policy makers (i.e. In delivering training of students).</li> <li>- Ministries in charge of Environment have more financial opportunities while academics have more scientific ideas on how implement strategies to overcome impacts on environment.</li> <li>- Strong collaboration will ensure suitable equipment in universities to have science-based data needed to make decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>UGANDA</b> (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uganda does not yet have an overarching chemicals legislation.</li> <li>- This is where we need to start.</li> <li>- Having available and reliable data on effects of chemicals at local level is equally important for policy making.</li> </ul>

Throughout the discussion, informal polls were conducted to help encourage discussion among the participants. They do not provide any representative data.

**Poll 1 Results (N=8)**

Should there be different stakeholders leading on implementing the sound management of chemicals and the sound management of waste?



**Q2. How else can or are we measuring sound management of chemicals and waste to provide a broader context on progress and challenges?**

<p><b>GERMANY</b> (NGO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, there was a UNEP workshop on targets and indicators for chemicals.</li> <li>- A long list of potential good indicators were developed.</li> <li>- The two indicators for 12.4 are not sufficient.</li> <li>- Here are a few examples from 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Percentage of national budget allocated to the implementation of institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks for the sound management of chemicals and waste, including enforcement of national legislation and prevention of illegal traffic.</li> <li>➤ Number of regulations and financial incentives developed to reduce the use of chemicals of highest concerns and to promote and substitute with safer alternatives</li> <li>➤ Percentage of hazardous wastes and other wastes, including obsolete stockpiles of pesticides, recovered, reused, and recycled, including for energy generation.</li> <li>➤ 12.5.3 Number of national facilities for environmentally sound management of hazardous waste</li> <li>➤ 11.1.1 Percentage of people living in or within x distance to uncontrolled dumpsites and other “hot spots” emitting and releasing hazardous chemical</li> <li>➤ 11.1.2 Percentage of major toxic hotspots/sites/stockpiles with chemical risk management measures applied</li> <li>➤ 11.6.1 Number of deaths as well and environmental and economic losses from industrial/technological disasters/emergencies</li> <li>➤ 11.6.2 Concentration of hazardous pollutants in the air</li> <li>➤ 11.6.3 Proportion of the urban population exposed to small/fine urban particulates (PM10 or PM2.5) in concentrations exceeding WHO Air Quality Guidelines</li> <li>➤ 11.6.4 Waste generation rates (kg per capita/year, overall and by economic sector</li> <li>➤ 11.6.5 Percentage of waste materials including obsolete stockpiles of pesticides, recovered, reused and recycled, including for energy generation, by economic sector.</li> <li>➤ 11.6.6 Number of cities with infrastructure in place for sustainable waste collection, separation, re-use, transport, recycling, resource recovery, and disposal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>KENYA</b> (Academia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through international agreements like the BRS, there should be a team or a body representing these institutions in every member country.</li> <li>- Responsibilities of these bodies would include conducting surveys on the sound management of chemicals.</li> <li>- Results should be globally transmitted to a central point and analysed to give a measure of the progress.</li> <li>- If done in time intervals of say two years, the trends will be indicators of whether we are getting it right or wrong so that immediate proper strategies may be put in place to avert the situation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MADAGASCAR</b> (Government)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rethink mode of production and consumption to reduce waste and practice circular economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOUTH AFRICA</b> (Academia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is need for an indicator which is not just assessing if countries have chemical legislation or not but also assessing the management structure within governments and ministries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOUTH AFRICA</b> (Government)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contradictions to the legislation need to be resolved so that waste can be seen in the same light.</li> <li>- SA's national waste management legislation is good but needs to be broadened for pesticides as this is not emphasised.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound management can only happen if the mandate falls in one directorate/government department - currently, it is part of 3 government department's mandates and some issues fall through the cracks, specifically issues around environmental fate.</li> <li>- If the mandate of chemicals can fall in one department instead of several departments sound management of chemical will be achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>TOGO</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The achievement of second indicators would be difficult if we do not have a strong collaboration between policy makers, NGOs, and academics.</li> <li>- The later have good ideas to help in achieving goals but not financial means.</li> </ul>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The suite of targets and indicators under the beyond 2020 framework will assist with this.</li> <li>- Need to ensure that indicators are considered whilst developing and agreeing these targets so they can be measured.</li> </ul>

#### Poll 2 Results (N=8)

Are you involved in any activities/projects that helps contribute to the implementation of SDG 12.4?

Yes         8

#### Poll 3 Results (N=3)

“Provide examples of new indicators you feel are needed for target 12.4.” Suggestions from participants included:

- “Promoting of student research for alternative solutions on waste and chemicals management by government.”
- “Number of skilled professionals on waste and chemicals management have increased.”
- “# of countries with one body overseeing the regulation of chemicals and waste.”

### Q3. How can we further accelerate the sound management of chemicals and waste by strengthening linkages to other relevant frameworks?

<b>GERMANY</b> (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is little awareness about chemicals in other frameworks.</li> <li>- Support the idea that side events should be held at meetings of other relevant frameworks, about the link between chemicals and climate/biodiversity/water etc.</li> <li>- Voluntary agreements like SAICM need clear action plans that have mandatory requirements for those who participate in the action.</li> </ul>
<b>KENYA</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a need to increase funding on scientific research work.</li> </ul>
<b>MADAGASCAR</b> (Government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project of SAICM such as lead paint project is a good example for international initiative to linkages of other relevant frameworks.</li> </ul>
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a key question particularly when looking at some international instruments that are voluntary and others are legally binding.</li> <li>- What is also key is to have a list of relevant targets and indicators that are required under other frameworks/instruments and not to repeat these in the Beyond 2020 framework.</li> <li>- A lack high political commitment to chemicals management is another barrier.</li> </ul>
<b>TOGO</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At national level, there is a steering committee to implement goals retained.</li> <li>- It would be better to have small committees on a specific target and make the adequate linkages as presented previously, with other goals and targets.</li> <li>- I remind that we had 8 MDGs and now we should implement 17 SDGs.</li> <li>- It could be more interesting to define less goals and to have opportunities to be more focused.</li> </ul>
<b>UGANDA</b> (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the issue of, for example agriculture and pesticides contamination, where we see human exposure and unsafe food/water, there is need to link these to existing frameworks for environment and human rights.</li> <li>- Again, there is need for access to information and data and adequate engagement with the policy makers.</li> </ul>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> (Academia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chemical products will be required to enable many of the SDGs.</li> <li>- Without working across all the SDGs, sound chemicals management will not be possible.</li> </ul>

#### Poll 4 Results (N=9)

Which areas/frameworks do you think are most relevant to link to for accelerating 12.4 on the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste? (participants could tick more than one)

Link to other parts of the SDG framework (e.g. related to waste, air quality, health, etc...)	7
Health	6
Food and agriculture	6
Human rights	5
Consumption and production (e.g. 10 Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption)	5

#### Poll 5 Results (N=7)

What are the key barriers that stakeholders need to address to accelerate 12.4? (participants could tick more than one)

Lack of capacity to provide technical	6
Lack of scientific data to determine interventions	6
Funding capacity	5
Consensus on good-practice interventions to address specific issues	2

#### Helpful resources:

- **Global Chemicals Outlook-II** <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/policy-and-governance/global-chemicals-outlook>
- **Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals – 2020 Report of the UN Secretary General** <https://undocs.org/en/E/2020/57>
- **Assessment on linkages with other clusters related to chemicals and waste management and options to coordinate and cooperate on areas of common interest - SAICM/IP.4/INF/3** [http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/IP4/INF/SAICM\\_IP4\\_INF\\_3.pdf](http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/documents/meetings/IP4/INF/SAICM_IP4_INF_3.pdf)

**CSDGs CoP:** The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Environmental Health Division at the University of Cape Town (UCT) created this Community of Practice (CoP) to foster online discussions and address key issues on Chemicals and SDGs (CSDGs) among stakeholders from governments, international organizations, industry, academia and civil society.

This CoP is contributing to the SAICM/GEF project on Emerging Chemicals Policy Issues Knowledge Management Component. 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)*.

If you have any question or require clarification on this initiative, please contact the SAICM Secretariat at [saicm.chemicals@un.org](mailto:saicm.chemicals@un.org) or UCT at [uctcops@outlook.com](mailto:uctcops@outlook.com).

Join the CSDGs CoP at: <https://saicmknowledge.org/community>

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