



University of Cape Town's

CHEMICALS NETWORK

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Digest Summary of Discussion 5 2022: Chemicals Risk Management: Utilising chemicals control and risk reduction tools.

The fifth Chemicals Network discussion covered the topic of Chemicals risk management with a focus on the UNEP's set of guidance for chemicals control and the ChemObs project. The discussion was presented by Pierre Quiblier, a programme officer at the United Nations Environment Programme. Pierre gave an overview of the set of guidance documents and a breakdown of each guidance document and discussed the purpose of ChemObs as well as the risk and vulnerability calculator.

To access the presentation., click [here](#).

ABOUT THE PRESENTER



Pierre Quiblier is a Programme Officer at the Chemical and Health Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Within the Branch, he developed, in 2006, the UNEP-UNDP Partnership Initiative on the mainstreaming of chemicals' sound management into development plans and policies. He managed and coordinated the UNEP publication of *Global Chemicals: Towards Sound Management of chemicals*. He also ensures liaison with the WHO and undertakes related environmental and health functions because of strengthening cooperation in common interest areas.

He led the development and organization of the first three inter-ministerial Health and Environment Conferences in Africa (Libreville, Gabon, 2008; Luanda, Angola, 2010; Libreville, Gabon, 2018). He developed and contributed to the implementation of the GEF-financed ChemObs project: a prototype in nine African countries of national integrated health and environment observatories to provide timely and evidence-based information to better predict, prevent, and reduce chemical risks to human health and the environment.

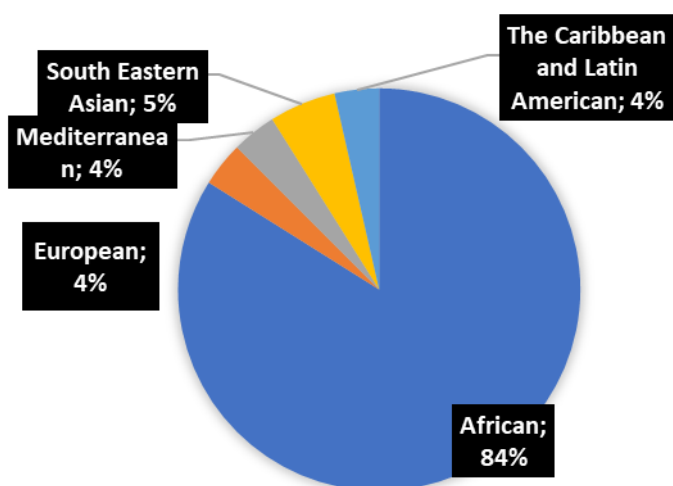
In 2003, he was seconded by UNEP to WHO to co-head the joint WHO-UNEP Secretariat of the Health and Environment Linkages Initiative (HELI) to promote the strategic value of a common approach to health and environmental issues.

He joined, in 1993, the UNEP New York Office in which he carried out liaison functions at the United Nations Headquarters. Pierre Quiblier graduated with a Master of Business Administration degree from Fordham University, New York. He also post-graduated with a Diplôme d'études approfondies (DEA) in political studies and graduated with a master's degree and post-graduation degree in Political Sciences from the University of Grenoble, France.

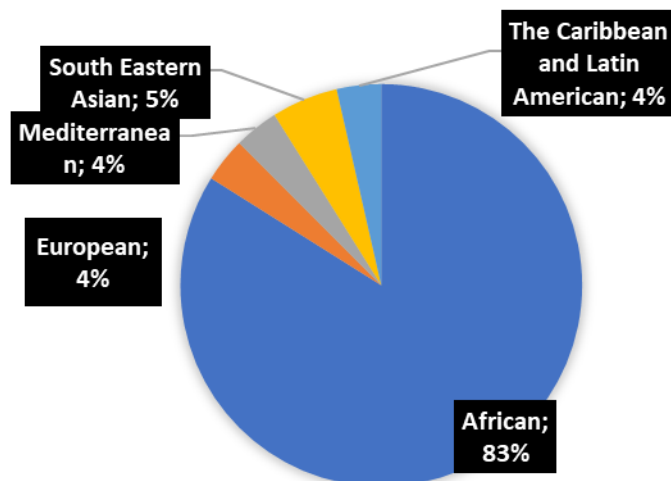
2022 DISCUSSION 5 ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN

ATTENDEES: 46
Female – 54%
Male – 46%

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION



REGIONAL REPRESENTATION



Key:

IGOs = Intergovernmental Organisations

NGOs = Non-governmental Organisations

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE DISCUSSION

Participants had divided opinions when it came to using the UNEP's set of guidance as an adequate tool to respond to the challenge faced by low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) on chemical and waste management. While others **agreed that the guidelines are valuable resources and a good starting point for LMICs they are not necessarily suited for LMICs**, and they do not give opportunities to scientists from these countries to input on it resulting in the guidance documents not being specific for the LMIC's needs. Other **factors may affect the suitability of the guidance for LMICs as resource availability, enforcement of chemicals and political status**.

The main national chemical management challenges faced by countries are a **lack of policy and stakeholder relationship, a lack of strong legislation on chemical management, poor chemical management legislation enforcement and a lack of collaboration between ministries**. The respondents also agreed that having multi-stakeholder participation and engagement is a key condition for adequate national management if it is to be integrated at a regional, national, and international level.

The presentation of the ChemObs project, from its start until its implementation, revealed **that many participants were not aware of the project and its implementation in LMICs**. Furthermore, participants agreed that **access to information, a gathering of information and data sharing are key challenges in their countries**.

When asked whether intersectoral cooperation is adequately rewarded at the national and international level, respondents from Zambia and Tanzania stated that it is well rewarded in their countries while other respondents stated that chemical management is still fragmented across different sectors.

Participants ended the discussion by identifying **key determinants** to implement an integrated approach to chemicals management as **stakeholder engagement, information sharing and stakeholder engagement**. The enabling framework was also mentioned as **having an international code of conduct on the management of chemicals and**

waste, providing data collection tools, having a progressive framework approach toward chemical reduction, and alternative substitution of hazardous chemicals but considering the various levels at which countries are in terms of capacity and technological advancement.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSION

The discussion was structured around three questions. The key discussion points raised by participants and organized by themes or countries (although not representatives) are presented under each question:

Question 1:

Is the UNEP set of guidance on chemical control an adequate response to the challenges experienced by LMICs on chemicals and waste management?

Country:	PARTICIPANT RESPONSES:
IRAN (ACADEMIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Yes and no. ➤ Yes, because this set of guidance are well developed and no because they are not necessarily suited for low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) countries. ➤ The big problem is that UNEP developing this set of guidance does not give opportunities to scientists from developing countries and when it gives it is only given to politics that you imagine in some countries.
GUYANA (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The guidance is indeed a very good starting tool for LMICs who are now trying to start managing chemicals. The guidance helped in the training and capacity building of chemical inspectors.
KENYA (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The guidance provides overall guidance and is not specified in the provision of guidance to countries' circumstances, which mostly are unique. The guidance, therefore, serves as a reference document but may not be fully adequate to address the chemical challenges in low and developing countries.
MADAGASCAR (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Madagascar has already used these documents to establish our observatory. These documents are a reference to adapt to each country's context.
TANZANIA (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No, there are many other factors towards chemical control including resource availability, enforcement of chemical legislation and political will.
ZAMBIA (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a need for a waiver for developing nations to allow them to catch up, especially when it comes to substitution to avoid regrettable substitution.

Throughout the discussion, informal polls were conducted to help encourage discussion among the participants. They do not provide any representative data but rather provide a snapshot of participants' views.

Poll 1 (N=12): What is the main national chemicals management challenge faced by your country? (Open-ended)

Legislation

- Ethiopia_ Lack of a strong chemical registration system, lack of clear roles and responsibilities among ministries, weak law enforcement.
- Kenya_ Lack of chemical policy and weak inter-stakeholders (consumers, government, and industry) coordination of chemicals management.
- Little enforcement of the legislation on chemicals.
- Lack of strong legislation on chemical management.
- Misunderstanding of mandates and chemicals management.
- Overlapping mandates in the various acts and regulations related to chemical management.
- Poor enforcement of legislation for chemical management due to lack of political will, inadequate resources, and poor infrastructures.
- South Africa_ There are no overarching chemicals bills, policies, or laws.
- Difficulty to classify new chemical products on the market.

Collaboration

- Harmonisation, coordination, and commitment of decision maker.
- Lack of collaboration between ministries, departments, and agencies.
- Guyana_ When mixtures are part of the formulation of a product, it makes registration difficult to assess.
- Lack of proper inventory of chemicals within countries.
- Inadequate enforcement, and difficulty in identification and storage.
- Iran_ All focal points are chosen by representatives from international organisations, and they never give any opportunity, budget for participation, etc to other experts.

Poll 2 (N=14): Are intersectoral and multi-stakeholder participation and engagement perceived as key conditions for an adequate national management scheme?

Perceived as a key condition for an adequate national management scheme:

- Yes, n= 9.
- It is a key condition but the engagement with multi-stakeholders needs to be at the national, regional, and international levels.
- Multi-stakeholder participation is key in harmonizing measures towards chemical management.
- It is an important practice which should be perceived in the interest of good practice of adequate national management, especially based on the principle of public participation and engagement.
- Many sectors are concerned with the management of chemicals throughout their life cycle. The management of Chemicals in products can only be cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder.

Poll 2. Cont (N=14): Are intersectoral and multi-stakeholder participation and engagement perceived as a key condition for an adequate national management scheme?

Not perceived as a key condition for an adequate national management scheme:

- Iran-No.

Question 2:

ChemObs a valuable and practical decision-making tool in the context of a developing country?

Country:	PARTICIPANT RESPONSES:
IRAN (ACADEMIA)	➤ ChemObs is not known.
MADAGASCAR (GOVERNMENT)	➤ ChemObs is valuable and practical decision-making but there is a big challenge in implementing it.

Poll 3 (N=12): Are access to information, gathering of information and data/capacity to share data and information key challenges at the national level in your country?

Access to information is a challenge:

- Yes, n=5.
- Yes, but ChemObs is the solution.
- South Africa - yes; data transparency is a problem. Knowing which chemicals are in the country, which sectors are using these chemicals and the quantities is a challenge.
- Yes, it is a key challenge, especially at the national level.
- Yes, it is a key challenge because data is not integrated at a multi-sectoral level.
- Kenya_ yes it is a challenge, however, the degree of challenge depends on the kind of data being sought to be accessed.
- The collection of information/data sharing is still a challenge due to the confidentiality of some of it, but also there are personal data that are not yet shared due to the absence of a centralization.
- Yes, A well-coordinated mechanism has to be institutionalized.

Others

- Iran-No.

Poll 4 (N=10): Is the economic evaluation of the cost of inaction and benefit of actions an effective tool for decision-makers to secure resources for chemical Management?

- Yes, n=6.
- Uganda_ this tool is not used in Uganda.
- Madagascar - data and information from these instruments should be used to support advocacy for the commitment of decision-makers.
- Yes, the cost of inaction is deterrent enforcement for industry or activity, so they will obey all the regulations and also avoid the contamination act.
- Kenya_ yes, it is an effective tool, especially while convincing the department of planning in planning and budgeting processes.

Question 3:

Is intersectoral cooperation adequately encouraged and rewarded at the national and international levels?

Country:	PARTICIPANT RESPONSES:
IRAN (ACADEMIA)	➤ Not at the national, for International also cooperation is not enough good and sometimes they act separately and independently.
OTHERS (COUNTRY AND SECTOR NOT SPECIFIED)	➤ Adequately and strengthen cooperation not only at the national level but international level.
SOUTH AFRICA (ACADEMIA)	➤ In many countries, chemicals management is fragmented and spread across different ministries.
TANZANIA (GOVERNMENT)	➤ In Tanzania, intersectoral cooperation is adequately encouraged and rewarded at the national and international level.
TUNISIA	➤ There is a voluntary commitment between stakeholders.
ZAMBIA (GOVERNMENT)	➤ It is adequately encouraged and rewarded in Zambia at a national level. With equal participation also at international level. ➤ It helps but can be supported by a carefully selected technical working group of experts from other ministries.

Throughout the discussion, informal polls were conducted to help encourage discussion among the participants. They do not provide any representative data but rather provide a snapshot of participants' views.

Poll 5, (N=7) What are the key determinants to implement an integrated approach?

Stakeholder engagement:

- Increased involvement of non-state actors e.g., civil society, and local and traditional leadership.
- Encourage stakeholder engagement with similar visions and purposes.
- Uganda_ Stakeholder engagement with all the sectors engaged in chemical management. This will foster collaboration which is key.
- South Africa_ Intersectoral collaboration may have a statutory element to it and be a legally binding process.
- Iran – There is a need for more cooperation among stakeholders.

Information sharing and coordination

- Joint inspections by regulatory bodies.
- Information sharing and research symposia by academia and research institutions.
- Having a single coordination.
- Having a common program.
- Having a centralised information storage system.
- Governments need to prioritize putting in place mechanisms that enhances coordinated joint planning, where sectoral roles are well defined.
- South Africa- the country started to do joint inspections with other regulatory bodies, and information regarding any outcomes from different audits or inspections is shared with all.
- Togo It will be very helpful for countries outside ChemObs to have access to this tool and carry out a similar project.

Poll 6 (N=7) What is the enabling framework for an integrated response to chemicals management?

- Precaution, prevention, and law enforcement.
- Have an international code of conduct on the management of chemicals and waste.
- Legal framework.
- Iran- More responsibilities toward the situation in developing countries from all related United Nations agencies.
- Provide data collection tools.
- Strengthen the knowledge of decision-makers by using vulnerability and economic cost calculators to set up an observatory.
- Uganda_The framework should be a progressive approach driving toward reduction and alternative substitution of hazardous chemicals but considering the various levels at which countries are in terms of capacity and technological advancement.
- Using the hierarchy of control for chemical risks.

Key resources:

- ChemObs website:
<https://chemobsafrica.org/>
- Guidance on chemicals control website:
<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/policy-and-governance/guidance-development-project-guidev>

Chemical Network: The Chemical Network is a non-partisan online forum established by the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) School of Public Health and Family Medicine. It was established as part of a knowledge management and sharing project supported by the Swedish Chemicals Authority (KemI).

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If you have any questions or require clarification on this initiative, please contact UCT at chemicallistserver@gmail.com.

If you are not already a member, join the Chemical Network at: <https://forms.office.com/r/Lk1tgAL6DF>

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 Swedish Chemicals Agency (KemI) or DEH UCT, nor does citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute an endorsement.