The fourth “Inter-agency Meeting on Sound Chemicals Management” was held on 26 November 2018 in Geneva. The one-day event, convened by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and hosted by ILO, brought together 23 participants from 15 different agencies and Secretariats.

The goal of the meeting was once again to provide an opportunity for direct dialogue between interested agencies and organisations and consider collaboration on the way forward towards the 2020 goal and beyond, in the context of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Topics Discussed and Agreed Action Points

During the meeting, participants considered a number of specific issue areas:

(1) Focus discussion on waste
The agencies engaged for the first time in a specific discussion on waste, in line with increasing international interest in the issue. Three agencies (WHO, BRS, UNEP) gave specific presentations and then all participants provided their views on the interface between chemicals and waste, including plastics, and its implications for future work on sound chemicals management and their relationship to the SDGs.

(2) Special presentations by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics
A representative of ECHA was invited to present their activities, as well as recent trends in regulation and collaboration with other regulatory bodies, and the UN Special Rapporteur On Human Rights and Toxics presented the “draft principles on worker’s rights and toxics”, as found in the 2018 Report to the Human Rights Council.

(3) Updates on international chemicals instruments
Agencies shared updates on a range of international chemicals instruments, including legally-binding instruments, voluntary initiatives, and related support work.

(4) Information exchange session, SAICM intersessional process for “beyond 2020”, and consideration of next steps
Also during the meeting, the agencies: provided brief verbal updates of relevant activities and important new developments, highlighting existing or new areas for possible collaboration and key developments that had taken place in follow-up to the previous IAM in March 2017; were updated on the “beyond 2020” process and preparations for OEWG-3 (2-4 April 2019), noting that it would have a strong focus on “beyond 2020” and that information papers from organizations and agencies were encouraged; and provided views on the future and direction of the Inter-agency process, including the suggestion to choose themes for future meetings.

For more information about the Inter-Agency Meetings, please visit:
https://www.who.int/iomc/Interagency_meetings/en/