GFC OEWG multi-stakeholder events on
"Strengthening economic and industry sector engagement
and action along value chains"

Thursday, 26 June 2025

Punta Del Este, Uruguay

Report and Outcomes

(prepared by the GFC Secretariat and the IOMC)

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1. Background and Overview

1.1 Background

The fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) Resolution V/8 on "Implementation arrangements" invited the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), governments, stakeholders, as well as other international organizations "to collaborate on, and develop proposals for implementation programmes (…) for further consideration at the next session of the Conference". The topic of "Integrating sound chemicals and waste management in economic and industrial sectors along value chains" is one of the topics specifically mentioned.

Since 2023, the IOMC has collaborated with stakeholders to develop the terms of reference (ToR) and a workplan for a Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) Implementation Programme focusing on industry engagement and action along value chains ("Industry Implementation Programme", "IP2"). To further this, the IOMC convened a multistakeholder workshop to develop a GFC Industry Implementation Programme, hosted at the OECD in Paris, on 24-26 February 2025.[1] Among several outcomes, there was input to a draft TOR and initial workplan for an Industry Implementation Programme, initiation of specific Industry Sector Programmes for the electronics, textiles and health industry sectors, and six thematic areas of work to support Industry Sector Programmes.

A dedicated multi-stakeholder day and related events were held during the GFC Open-Ended Working Group on Thursday 26 June, 2025 in order to build upon these outcomes and consider the role of chemicals and waste management in fostering sustainability and circularity along value chains, in particular related to GFC strategic objective D.

1.2 Overview of the multi-stakeholder events

The multi-stakeholder events aimed to increase knowledge sharing and engage stakeholders in the co-creation of the Implementation Programme (IP) in the lead-up to its consideration at the International Conference in 2026.[2] Stakeholders, in person and online, contributed to the event objectives which included:

- Presenting work undertaken in 2023–2025 to develop specific components of the Programme, including thematic workstreams and industry sector programmes.
- Developing a shared understanding of the value that an Industry Implementation Programme can bring to the GFC.

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[1] https://partnership.who.int/docs/librariesprovider14/default-document-library/iomc/iomc-workshop---ip2-meeting-report.pdf?sfvrsn=f0b8727b_3

[2] See
https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/47806/OEWG_INF_document_13_FINAL_V2.pdf

- Showcasing selected stakeholder initiatives that contribute to knowledge-sharing within the Programme and broader GFC implementation.
- Identifying collaborative activities for inclusion in the global workplan of the Programme and in the workplans of specific industry sector programmes.
- Exploring opportunities to build momentum for the Programme and to engage additional stakeholders in the lead-up to and following the International Conference (planned for late 2026).

Following an introduction which presented the rationale and context, the day commenced with concurrent sessions on cross-cutting thematic workstreams. These events highlighted the relevance of each topic, summarized work undertaken, and featured stakeholder presentations. In the afternoon, the focus shifted to industry sector programmes for the textile, electronics, and healthcare sectors. An additional session was held on construction, to consider its potential as an industry sector programme. During the day, sessions were held to build knowledge on chemical footprint methodologies and finance. In addition, a cross-cutting event on occupational safety and health showcased the importance of world of work considerations within IPs and the need to enhance engagement of the labour sector and its stakeholders.

2. Cross-cutting Thematic Workstreams

2.1 Priority Chemicals of Concern

Key Messages / Takeaways

- Established regulatory and voluntary mechanisms, including prioritized chemical lists are already in place and available, but their uptake and integration across sectors must be significantly enhanced for broader impact.
- The interplay between regulatory instruments and voluntary initiatives creates a robust, adaptable system for chemical prioritization, reinforcing comprehensive consumer safety.
- Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration and engagement remains essential to advance targeted actions that effectively mitigate chemical risks.
- There is increased interest in continuing engagement and enhancing collaboration to support GFC implementation programmes through a multi-stakeholder approach.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

Suggested collaborative activities included:
- Maintain lists of priority chemicals of concern to provide harmonized, accessible references for regulators and industry.
- Support capacity building to boost regulatory enforcement.
- Promote information exchange on best practices across sectors.

Identified opportunities to build momentum for the Programme included:

- Consider incentives to increase industry sectorial engagement.
- Foster global knowledge through shared platforms for information exchange.
- Leverage existing tools and encourage stakeholders to contribute insights based on usage across sectors.

Further Discussion Points

- The session focused on knowledge-sharing and briefly explored approaches to identify and prioritize chemicals of concern, particularly those that pose risks to human health and the environment. These approaches include a combination of legal frameworks, scientific hazard assessments, and public consultations to determine which chemicals require legislation.
- Industries implement voluntary schemes that encourage the adoption of responsible practices by shifting away from harmful chemicals through innovation, transparency and with emphasis on reducing occupational exposure and promoting substitution with less hazardous chemicals.
- Multi-sectorial engagement and information exchange on best practices are key elements to support broader policy measures and alignment with global agreements. These efforts are necessary to contribute to a more health conscious, environmentally responsible approach to chemical use across supply chains.
- Practical demonstrations and best practices, including innovation and responsible care initiatives promote effective chemical controls across industrial sectors.
- Some sectors are frontrunners in developing priority lists – approaches in the textiles and electronics sectors for instance were discussed, but it will be key not to leave other sectors behind, hence the need to also identify incentives to foster the engagement of other industries.
- The discussions highlighted the importance of considering categories beyond those that have been already identified, as well as who holds the burden of proving adverse effects and requesting the data.

2.2 Chemical Footprint Approaches

Key Messages / Takeaways

- Markets, investors, regulators, and the public demand transparent communication on chemicals risk and impacts throughout their life cycle using, for example, chemical footprint approaches. The key starting point for all chemical footprint approaches is the collection of data on chemicals use; this can be combined with emissions and impact potentials to estimate impacts on human health and biodiversity.
- The industry is already making use of different chemical footprint approaches embedded in various decision support tools to establish and monitor voluntary targets

of reduction of hazardous substances, but there is a need to strengthen harmonization e.g. the definition of "chemicals of concern (CoCs)" and common terminology as well as how to best represent and reduce environmental impact from chemical life cycle emissions and chemicals in products.

- There is strong interest in collaborating in a workstream focused on chemical footprint approaches within the IPs of the GFC. Activities proposed within this workstream include:
  - ➢ Develop guidance to apply chemical footprint approaches in sector programmes;
  - ➢ Promote industry sectors' commitments to using chemical footprint approaches connected to specific GFC targets;
  - ➢ Harmonization of chemical footprint terminology and initiating work towards an international standard, rooted on a robust, science-based systems approach.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

Participants identified several forward-looking areas for collaboration:

- Harmonizing data structures, terminology and classification frameworks, with interest in progressing toward a global standard. This was seen as a practical step to support both comparability and interoperability across tools.
- Embedding chemical footprinting into sustainability reporting and regulatory frameworks (e.g. CSRD, CSDDD, Taxonomy, ESG criteria for investors), allowing companies to align chemical management with existing commitments and disclosure processes.
- Enabling traceable and secure data flows across the value chain, including mechanisms to address confidentiality while still achieving meaningful transparency.
- Creating guidance on how to apply chemical footprint approaches in specific sectors, setting a reference for companies.

Further Discussion Points

- An overview table was used to provide a common reference point for the subsequent technical and strategic discussion.
- The company *Tarkett* shared its work integrating chemical management into its circular economy strategy, using Cradle to Cradle and Life Cycle Assessment to support eco-design and climate goals. To ensure transparency, the company applies a Material Health Statement methodology, which enables supplier engagement through third-party confidentiality frameworks.
- Case Medical emphasized that safer chemical alternatives can be both effective and economically viable. The company's approach combines certified ingredients, concentrated formulations, and annual footprint tracking, reinforcing its commitment to measurable progress and sustainable product design.

- Clariant, a specialty chemicals producer, presented a portfolio-level sustainability assessment programme aligned with international frameworks. Their process combines risk-based benchmarking with digitalization, informing decisions in production, procurement and innovation. They highlighted internal targets to actively phase out high-risk substances, showing how footprinting contributes directly to product governance.
- Philips shared its multi-pronged strategy to reduce hazardous substances and VOCs, drawing on internal classification systems and regulatory platforms. An LCA-based Environmental Profit & Loss methodology is used to quantify impacts and support forward-looking product stewardship.
- Participants explored how companies manage data and interface with suppliers. It was noted that while some digital systems are still maturing, engagement strategies based on trust, confidentiality, and verified third-party involvement are proving effective. There was interest in how these approaches could eventually align with emerging Digital Product Passport frameworks.
- Additional insights through interactive sessions included:
    - Overlap and Complementarity: Participants observed that while the presented tools and underlying chemical footprint approaches vary in scope in response to answering relevant yet different questions, they share common features such as reliance on detailed chemical inventories and stakeholder engagement. These shared foundations offer opportunities for convergence.
    - Additional Approaches: Recommendations included exploring ecodesign, Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD), and GHS criteria for possible consideration in chemical footprint assessments. Calls were made to distinguish between use-stage and manufacturing-stage chemicals to refine chemical footprint boundaries.
    - Identification of CoCs: Most tools presented were seen as effective in identifying CoCs. There was support for developing a more unified and practical global classification system to guide implementation.
    - Quantifying Inputs and Impacts: All presented tools quantify inputs of chemicals, and most assess impact dimensions to some degree, with differences in level of detail, aspects covered and intended use.
- Participants affirmed the need for a coordinated IP that includes a clear roadmap, practical guidance, and alignment with GFC targets (particularly D1, D3, and D6). There was strong interest in capacity-building efforts tailored to sector-specific needs and use cases. Calls were made for strengthened education on safer substitution, greater visibility of credible chemical lists, and enhanced integration with circularity and life-cycle strategies.

2.3 Transparency and Traceability Along Value Chains

Key Messages / Takeaways

- With the IOMC's February 2025 workshop in mind, the session tried to advance transparency and traceability efforts to: 1) build an understanding of the chemical information needs of different user groups along the value chains, and 2) compile existing practices and tools.
- In this session, stakeholders from four different sectors (government, industry (textile and automobile sectors), NGOs, workers group), showcased previous and ongoing initiatives to motivate participants to provide feedback and build momentum for the thematic area, seeing it as a key area of work. The main takeaways from the previous day's masterclass on the same theme were also shared.
- There is a high complexity of supply chains. For example, in the automotive industry there are around 9,000 components and 3,500 tier 1 suppliers. Full transparency across production and waste stages is a difficult undertaking, and solutions will be different across sectors. In addition, coordination at the government level is necessary, with different entities and requirements.
- Some barriers include: limited use of digital tools; lack of national chemicals databases; fragmented data and poor intersectoral communication; Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) implementation needs to be scaled up; and accuracy, completeness and harmonization of safety data sheets (SDS) needs to be enhanced.
- Transparency brings benefits, not only complexity: it is crucial for the circular economy, sustainability, and appropriate waste handling. It also helps enforce compliance, support preventive approaches to workplace accidents, and protect vulnerable workers and communities

Priority Actions and Recommendations

Suggested collaborative activities in the workplan under development included:

- Identification of user groups along value chains and their chemical information needs in specific contexts
    - ο Both in the automotive and textile sectors efforts have been undertaken to map the stages and stakeholders in the value chain. Engaging in other sector-specific implementation programmes would be useful for other sectors, including gathering existing mappings.
- Compiling good practices and tools to advance transparency and traceability of chemical information along value chains.
    - ο A first identification of **practices and tools** was possible during the two interactive sessions. The GHS (with safety data sheets) was reiterated as a fundamental tool, as well as PRTRs and the work under the digital product

passports. Use of existing databases or well-established repositories, such as the OECD eChem portal were also mentioned, or other private sector systems (such as ZDHC and the automobile's IMDS).

- Transparency and traceability benchmarks/standards along value chains, such as Digital Product Passports (DPPs) to advance chemicals transparency and foster compliance and circularity.
  - DPPs and other tools, including UN Transparency Protocols (UNTP)
  - In advancing DPPs or other tools, certain characteristics were emphasized, such as the need to be science/evidence-based, harmonized and accessible with clear information, reliable and trustworthy, and relevant for the lifecycle. The difficulties around the loss of chemical information in the waste and recycling phases had been previously noted.

- Identified opportunities to build momentum for the Programme were:
  - Key areas for work: Consistency and accessibility for safety data sheets, accuracy of content across users, stakeholder feedback mechanisms, stakeholder responsibilities, and strengthening worker training programmes; development of indicators in value chains; better producer-to-end-of-life communication, including engaging with recyclers and waste managers; harmonized standards for disclosing chemical content; and manufacturer-specific tracking.
  - Building from previous and on-going work (e.g., SAICM Chemicals in Products programme and specific sectors) was highlighted as an important approach for this IP.
  - Understanding legislation around the world is important, and this could connect with the regulatory benchmarking tool and reporting under IP1.

2.4 Disclosure and Reporting Standards/Frameworks

Key Messages / Takeaways

- Increasing coverage of pollution and convergence of disclosure frameworks: major disclosure frameworks now include pollution in some form. There is a growing alignment across major sustainability reporting standards, with formal collaborations and cross-referencing signaling movement toward consistency. Panelists stressed the need for enhanced alignment across reporting regimes to avoid fragmented data and to improve decision-making, ensure consistency and interoperability across standards.
- Disclosure gaps acknowledged, which require increased multistakeholder collaboration: While disclosures are improving, further work is needed on comparability, completeness, and transparency, particularly in relation to hazardous

substances and executive oversight. Developing meaningful disclosure standards requires input from governments, civil society, industry, and financial institutions.

- Chemical risks and impacts in investment and financing decisions: Investors are increasingly factoring chemical risk into their assessments, with emphasis on transparency, accountability, and the systemic nature of such risks. Effective pollution-related disclosure supported by actionable metrics enables investors to make informed decisions and strengthens accountability and shareholder engagement around pollution impacts.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

- Encourage broader participation in disclosure processes: involve diverse geographies, especially from the Global South, in the development and implementation of disclosure frameworks. Interested stakeholders should reach out to the GFC Secretariat and contribute to the development of a disclosure workstream ahead of the International Conference.
- Integrate pollution and chemicals in risk and impact assessments and strengthen financial institution-company engagement: equip financial institutions with tools and disclosures to assess chemical footprints and associated systemic risks and impacts.
- Support safer chemical alternatives: Leverage key performance indicators (KPIs) and disclosures to drive the adoption of safer substitutes in chemical management.
- Encourage interoperability between standards and facilitate Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) participation in reporting: Use simplified standards to enhance data availability and financial access for smaller entities.

Further Discussion Points

- The topic of the panel discussions was disclosure standards as a key enabler to mobilize finance and opportunities to enhance pollution-related disclosure. The discussion about advancing the pollution-related disclosure workstream aligns with the GFC's aim to improve chemicals management through better data transparency and reporting.
- The panel focused on the importance of pollution-related disclosure for financial institutions and how current sustainability reporting frameworks can better support the management of chemical and environmental risks. The panel discussion featured five speakers: Alan Gomez (TNFD), Tamar Zijstra, (GRI), Olena Liakh (EFRAG), Angela Pinilla, (CPA), and Larisa Ruoff (LWC).
- The session concluded with a call for broader participation in the pollution-related disclosure workstream, inviting stakeholders to contribute to its ongoing development. Stakeholders who are interested in joining this work stream and to contribute to it can reach out to the GFC Secretariat in the next months towards the International Conference.

2.5 Private Sector Finance

Key Messages / Takeaways

- The finance gap to meet the chemical and waste challenges will require innovative financing, including leveraging private sector actors like commercial banks and insurers.
- Private finance engagement is critical to transition value chains in alignment with the GFC objectives and targets. Banks and investors can be central partners in driving change due to their financial relationships with companies across value chains. Responsible investment is growing, with asset owners calling for disclosure, transition plans, and biodiversity integration, and numerous investors signed two statements endorsing these actions.
- Blended finance and de-risking tools—as demonstrated for example by the GEF—are effective to catalyze private sector capital, particularly in high-risk areas.
- Clear data, metrics, and policy signals are key to unlock finance, build financial institutions confidence, and measure progress.
- There is significant investment potential in "green chemicals" and safer chemical alternatives across high-use sectors such as textiles, electronics, and construction.
- Panel and sector studies stressed the importance of breaking down complex sectors (e.g. cotton) into components and matching each with suitable instruments.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

- Develop methodologies to identify financing needs and transition costs for high-chemical dependency sectors.
- Mobilize finance through policy support across value chains and for R&D in safer alternatives, and through innovative financing solutions, such as green credit lines, sustainability-linked loans, EPR schemes and blended finance instruments.
- Promote data transparency and standard metrics to support financial institutions due diligence and impact assessments.
- Create a "finance workstream" within GFC IPs to shape financial markets and scale risk-tolerant capital.

Further discussion points

- Pollution is linked with Climate and Nature Agendas: pollution affects freshwater, soil, and biodiversity, and exacerbates climate change. Integrated strategies are needed rather than treating these as separate issues.
- Most banks are still early in understanding and addressing pollution risks — particularly beyond high-profile pollutants like PFAS or POPs. Financial institutions need support: Engagement is growing, but frameworks, data, and policy signals are vital.

- Need for data; science-based monitoring and performance data: Banks and investors stressed the urgent need for standardized, science-aligned, and granular data to establish impact baselines, support ESG ratings, and track progress on pollution reduction across portfolios and value chains.
- Public policy support: Public policy was encouraged to play an enabling role by providing incentives and supporting innovation through grants, subsidies, and streamlined approval processes
- R&D in safe alternatives: There was a call for increased long-term investment in research and development of safer chemical substitutes, as innovation is key to phasing out hazardous substances and enabling sustainable transitions.
- Feasibility Studies and Client Engagement: The session stressed the need for financial institutions to co-develop feasible pollution targets with clients and called for collaboration between financial institutions and industry in this exercise.
- The session stressed the need for strong measurability under GFC to make financing and the GFC Target D3 actionable.

2.6 Green and Sustainable Chemistry Innovations and Solutions

Key Messages / Takeaways

- An integrated approach is essential: advancing Green and Sustainable Chemistry (GSC) requires a coordinated effort across invention, innovation, implementation, investment, incentives, and iteration.
- Transforming chemistry at the core: The inherent nature of chemicals and materials must change—guided by principles like GSC, Green Chemistry, Green Engineering, and by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Policy and regulatory coherence: governments play a critical role in embedding GSC into national policy frameworks, ensuring coherence between domestic regulations and international commitments.
- Industry Engagement and Innovation: the private sector is embracing GSC through frameworks like Responsible Care, sustainability metrics, and tools such as LCA, SSbD, and eco-labels—demonstrating that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand.
- Education and Workforce Development: building capacity through education, curriculum reform, and youth engagement is vital to empower the next generation of chemists and innovators.
- Standardization and Measurement: there is a growing need for harmonized standards and metrics to ensure consistency and comparability across value chains and regions.

Priority Actions or Recommendations

- Develop a roadmap for integrated GSC action in key sectors: co-create a roadmap that aligns invention, innovation, implementation, investment, and incentives, with clear roles for each stakeholder group.
- Embed GSC in national and sectoral policies: support countries in integrating GSC into national strategies, regulatory frameworks, and sectoral plans (e.g., agriculture, waste, manufacturing).
- Scale up investment and incentive mechanisms: mobilize funding and design incentives to support GSC innovation, especially in developing countries and MSMEs.
- Strengthen education and youth engagement: Promote curriculum development, youth leadership, and workforce training to build long-term capacity for GSC.
- Foster Public-Private Partnerships: encourage collaboration between governments, industry, and academia to drive innovation, share knowledge, and scale solutions.
- Support standardization and metrics Development: advance international efforts to harmonize sustainability standards, tools (e.g., LCA), and reporting frameworks.
- Leverage existing platforms and networks: utilize and expand initiatives like the Global Greenchem Innovation and Network Programme (GGNIP), ISC3, and GEF programmes to build momentum and share best practices.
- Create enabling environments for MSMEs: provide infrastructure, technical support, and market access to help MSMEs innovate and thrive within the GSC ecosystem.

3. Industry Sector Programmes

3.1 Electronics Industry Sector

Key Messages / Takeaways

- The session highlighted that a sector-specific approach under the GFC is not only timely but essential to catalyse systemic change in the electronics industry. With the sector's significant reliance on hazardous chemicals many of which persist through production, use, and end-of-life stages implementing the GFC provides a unique opportunity to promote chemical safety, occupational health, and environmentally sound management of waste.
- A major outcome of the discussion was the consensus that meaningful implementation of GFC objectives must be rooted in national contexts while remaining globally coherent. The electronics sector was recognized as a strategic leverage point, where upstream innovation, midstream compliance, and downstream accountability must align to reduce chemical risks and enhance circularity. Participants highlighted the urgent need to address gaps in information sharing between manufacturers, suppliers, and recyclers, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries where informal labour dominates electronics dismantling and recycling.

- Further, the OEWG reinforced the importance of integrating existing voluntary tools and industry best practices into the GFC programme, rather than re-inventing the wheel. The Responsible Business Alliance (RBA), Clean Electronics Production Network (CEPN), and Clean Production Action (CPA) all showcased tools that support due diligence, worker safety, and chemical foot printing. Aligning these tools with the GFC's Targets D3, D6, and D7 is seen as a cost effective and scalable strategy.
- Crucially, the session emphasized that promoting transparency and traceability across the electronics value chain is foundational to achieving the GFC's strategic objectives. Governments, particularly Japan and Egypt, demonstrated how national policies can foster coherence between economic growth, occupational safety, and environmental protection. The electronics programme, therefore, serves as a model of integrated chemicals governance, building a bridge between voluntary corporate practices and public regulatory frameworks.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

- The OEWG recognized several strategic priorities that should inform the development of the Electronics Sector Implementation Programme. Foremost is the need to integrate voluntary initiatives with national policies. Rather than duplicating efforts, the programme should map existing standards such as those developed by RBA and CEPN and identify synergies with the GFC targets. This will maximize efficiency while accelerating uptake.
- Another recommendation was the localization of the programme through pilot country initiatives. These pilots should serve as living laboratories to test tools, assess stakeholder engagement models, and demonstrate effective facility-level chemical management. Lessons learned can inform broader regional and global scaling.
- In addition, the OEWG emphasized the development of a sector-wide knowledge and resource hub, a repository of tools, training materials, and guidance documents accessible to policymakers, industry actors, and workers. Such a platform could promote harmonization of data collection practices and enhance cross-border collaboration.
- Crucially, the report calls for mechanisms to promote traceability and protect confidential business information. By using digital platforms and structured data-sharing systems, companies can meet regulatory and consumer expectations without compromising competitiveness. These systems must cascade down to informal and Tier 3 suppliers, who are often invisible within supply chains.
- Financial and institutional support was also flagged as critical. National governments should consider fiscal incentives, green subsidies, and innovation grants to encourage uptake of safer practices, especially by SMEs. Ministries of finance, labour, and environment should coordinate closely to build coherent inter-ministerial strategies.
- Finally, to foster long-term transformation, the OEWG recommends using international fora to validate the ToRs for the electronics programme and reaffirm

multi-stakeholder commitment. These platforms will serve not only as accountability spaces but also as drivers of momentum for countries and companies still in the early stages of implementation.

Further Discussion Points

The proposed Electronics Industry Sector Programme would follow a phased, multi-stakeholder approach. This design reflects the complexity of the sector and the varying levels of readiness across countries and facilities.

- Phase one focuses on building foundational capacities. It emphasizes the identification of chemicals of concern, development of disclosure systems, and the deployment of digital tools such as chemical footprint databases and additive tracking platforms. This phase is particularly geared toward enhancing transparency, promoting risk communication, and enabling facilities to understand their chemical profiles.
- Phase two introduces design-based interventions and producer responsibility mechanisms. This includes circular economy integration, EPR schemes, and safer material substitution. Design improvements and regulatory incentives will support upstream manufacturers while preparing downstream actors such as recyclers and dismantlers to handle legacy pollution and e-waste more safely and sustainably.
- Phase three sets the stage for long-term transformation. This includes institutionalizing due diligence practices, aligning national and regional regulations with international standards, and embedding financial mechanisms to support SMEs and informal actors in transitioning toward safer alternatives. It also involves piloting national implementation models to localize global guidance while showcasing scalable successes.

Each phase would remain adaptive, allowing countries to contextualize interventions based on their governance, technological capacity, and market conditions. The phased design recognizes that some countries may leapfrog certain stages by leveraging existing structures, while others will require tailored technical assistance and investment mobilization.

3.2 Healthcare Industry Sector

Key Messages / Takeaways

- The health sector is a critical sector because it protects health, comprises 10% of the global economy and leads by example through the principle "do no harm."
- There is momentum as evidenced by all the case studies shared and interest shown in the work being done that should be capitalized and built on, in order to identify pilots for scale up.
- When the protection of health is at the centre of chemicals and waste management efforts, the health sector can synergize with other sectors for greater impact.

Session Details

The scope and purpose of the session was to take stock of progress on the preparation of a proposal for a GFC Healthcare Industry Sector Programme through the engagement of the GFC OEWG and other health sector stakeholders and further deliberation on the ToR. Objectives included:

- Highlight case studies showing momentum in the healthcare sector
- Discuss roles and responsibilities of key stakeholder groups, including health system management, health trade unions, suppliers of health products, UN procurement, standard setting and collaborators, such as the WHO Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATACH)
- Review Draft ToR: Discuss and identify key concepts and priorities and relevant work of stakeholders such as importance of procurement in supply chain transformation, reducing unnecessary products and procedures, and identifying and prioritizing chemicals of concern

Key points from the discussions included:
- WHO and Health Care Without Harm described the World Health Assembly mandates and opportunities for a Healthcare Industry Sector Programme. The health sector represents 10% of the global economy and 5% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of which 70 % of the health sector emissions come from the supply chain. Plastics comprise 30% of all healthcare wastes (70% in some settings).
- UNDP emphasized the importance of moving upstream to change the production and procurement of hazardous products in order to reduce waste and pollution.
- UNEP shared the results of work on the GFC Issue of Concern on Environmentally Persistent Pharmaceutical Pollutants and the importance of wide dissemination of knowledge products.
- ILO discussed the importance of health worker protection often overlooked in favor of patient safety in health care settings and the importance of applying the occupational health hierarchy of controls to eliminate hazards and substitute for less toxic chemicals and materials.
- The production, packaging, transportation, use, and disposal of medical products is a major contributor not only to climate change, but also to chemical contamination, resource depletion, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance, and air and water pollution.
- Case studies illustrated the momentum, good practices and outcomes already in place in health care settings including among the network of Global Green and Healthy Hospitals in 80 countries. Presentations from India and Latin American demonstrated the phase-out of unnecessary plastics and chemicals of concern with reductions in unnecessary glove use and waste.

- The workshop participants in-person and online included representatives of international organizations, Member States (e.g., Ministry of health, Ministry of environment, Ministry of agriculture), civil society, and other key stakeholders, including health service providers, health sector suppliers, academia, and workers' organizations, regulators, policy makers, and industry representatives working on chemicals, waste and pollution, climate change and health, environmental sustainability, plastic chemicals in healthcare products, healthcare waste management, procurement and supply chains and others.

Further Discussion Points

The highlights from breakout groups are as follows:
1. Are the key elements identified as appropriate for the Healthcare Sector Implementation Programme?
    - With respect to stakeholder engagement, consider including the media to enhance public awareness regarding issues like mercury phase-out and waste management responsibilities under the Basel Convention.
    - Consider incorporating a narrative focused on protecting children and youth, particularly regarding chemicals of concern in pediatric hospital settings, waste from COVID personal protective equipment (PPE) and the impact of pharmaceuticals on health and the environment.
    - There is a need for reducing hazardous chemicals in healthcare and addressing pharmaceutical pollutants, including antibiotic resistance, suggesting the development of guidelines for release standards.
    - With respect to environmental concerns, discussions included the role of hospitals in the use and discharge of disinfecting chemicals and the potential for safer alternatives such as soap instead of harsh disinfectants.
    - With respect to educational Initiatives, there was general consensus on the need for educational programs to raise consumer awareness, especially targeting younger audiences and Right-to-Know for health workers.

2. Are there any elements that are missing?
    - The unique dynamics of pharmaceutical waste were noted as a factor separate from regular waste disposal processes.
    - Measurable Indicators of successful implementation of a health IP
    - Social-economic cost analysis

3. Which relevant GFC targets would a Healthcare Industry Sector Programme help to achieve?
    - In addition to Targets B5, D6, D7 (occupational health and safety), and E6 (synergies and linkages) presented as relevant GFC targets in plenary, TargetA1 (Education and institutional capacity) was highlighted as a relevant GFC target, among others, for the healthcare sector implementation program.

4. Participants ranked priority activities that would contribute to a healthcare sector IP program as (1) identifying chemicals of concern, (2) fostering stakeholder engagement, (3) mapping good practices and policies, promoting linkages to climate resilient, environmentally sustainable healthcare supply chains, and (5) identifying unnecessary chemicals and unnecessary use of plastics in healthcare settings, in particular single use plastic medical devices.

5. Participants considered some higher priority chemicals of concern in the healthcare sector to be: mercury, pesticides, PFAS, PVC, pharmaceuticals, disinfectants.

6. What could be prioritized as next steps (e.g. in the coming 6 months)?
    o Mapping of existing good practices to identify those with potential for scale-up
    o Develop a pilot programme to map chemicals of concern in health care settings and alternatives for phase-out.
    o Elements from the healthcare sector implementation programme should be communicated to the new Intergovernmental Science Policy Panel on Chemicals Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) and integrated into the GFC. There are complexities especially concerning illegal pharmaceutical waste and the need to navigate these challenges post-pandemic.

7. Overall, there was a strong emphasis on collaboration across sectors including the health sector good practice examples for textiles and electronics, addressing occupational and environmental health concerns in collaboration with ILO and health trade unions, moving upstream using the Sustainable Procurement Index Health to reduce and prevent hazardous exposures and waste and optimizing waste management strategies in healthcare. Synergies with climate and health initiatives were emphasized to achieve climate resilient, environmentally sustainable health care supply chains.

3.3 Textiles Industry Sector

Key Messages / Takeaways
- Commitment from Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC), Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), and Pesticides Action Network (PAN) UK to co-lead with UNEP in an INTERIM Ad-Hoc Working Group towards the development of Implementation Programme for textiles sector under the GFC to meet target D6.
- Multiple solutions to address chemical use in the textiles sector already exist and they can be scaled.
- Essential for succeeding with the development and implementation of a programme for textile industry engagement under the GFC include collaboration among multiple stakeholders, supporting policy integration and awareness raising.

- It is essential to cover the entire value chain when developing an Industry Sector Programme for the textile sector. The programme should address textiles specific issues on data and traceability, occupational and community health and safety and chemicals of concern.

Priority Actions and Recommendations
- Continue development of the Industry Sector Programme: work will focus on completing the ToR and developing a workplan for a textiles-specific IP under the GFC. This includes defining key themes, identifying priorities, and aligning with existing initiatives.
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement: A model for involving stakeholders in the development and implementation of the IP will be defined. This includes identifying key contributors and ensuring a balanced and inclusive group representing different parts of the value chain.
- Align with and build on existing initiatives: The process will aim to map and connect ongoing work across public and private sectors to build on what already exists, identify gaps, and avoid duplication.
- Mobilize support and coordination: Efforts are underway to ensure dedicated coordination and explore opportunities for funding, collaboration, and resource mobilization to support the next phases of work.
- Maintain momentum: Follow-up discussions and working sessions will be held in the coming months to build consensus, refine the ToR, and begin shaping a roadmap for action.

Summary of sessions
- The sessions held on 26 June 2025 aimed to raise awareness of these efforts and catalyse further engagement. They provided a space for knowledge exchange among industry leaders, government representatives, NGOs, and technical experts. By anchoring the textiles IP in the realities of the supply chain and the needs of stakeholders, this initiative supports not only target D6 of the GFC but also broader ambitions to transform chemicals management in the textile industry.
- The sessions focused on addressing the health and environmental impacts of chemicals used throughout the textiles value chain, aiming to align existing initiatives with the targets of the GFC, particularly target D6, while contributing to broader objectives.
- Discussions centred around identifying existing tools, standards, and methodologies, as well as mapping gaps, and exploring financing challenges and opportunities in the following thematic areas: Transparency, Data and Traceability; Occupational and Community Health and Safety; Chemicals of Concern and their Replacement.

- Approximately 54 in-person and 65 virtual participants attended (39% identifying as male, 61 % identifying as female), representing a wide range of regions and sectors across the textile value chain.

Highlights from panel discussions, session 1

The first session of the textiles-focused event at the OEWG brought together stakeholders across the value chain to explore how the GFC can support and accelerate efforts to reduce the harmful impacts of chemicals in textile and leather production.

Moderated by Yiliqi (NRDC), the session opened with remarks by Sheila Aggarwal-Khan (UNEP), who emphasised the scale of the challenge and the importance of transparency, traceability, and regulatory harmonization to address health and environmental risks. She stressed the need to move the textiles sector beyond niche solutions into systemic transformation aligned with GFC targets.

Jago Wadley (PAN UK) and Marcelo Lobo (ZDHC) provided an overview of the ongoing development of the Implementation Programme (IP) for textiles. They announced that PAN UK and ZDHC have committed to co-convene the early development of the IP in collaboration with UNEP and extended an open invitation to other organizations to join the effort. Wadley also conveyed the formal commitment of Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), a long-standing PAN UK partner, to support the IP. The second panel brought a value chain perspective on reducing chemicals in the textile sector with a focus on the cotton value chain. Dr. Tadesse Amera (PAN Ethiopia) shared an Ethiopian initiative in which smallholder cotton farmers adopted integrated pest management techniques using locally made, non-toxic "*food sprays*" to attract beneficial insects. This farmer-centred approach led to significant reductions in pesticide use, and in 2017 resulted in the first group of Ethiopian smallholders achieving international organic certification for cotton.

Tanya Cox (Chronos Sustainability) provided insights from her work with the UNEP Finance Initiative, mapping financial flows in chemical-intensive value chains, with a focus on cotton apparel. She highlighted three key bottlenecks in transitioning to safer chemical use: inconsistent or poorly implemented policies, a lack of transparency in chemical formulations, and limited access to scalable co-learning models like the farmer field schools described by PAN Ethiopia. Debaaj Abidi (ILO) shared lessons from a pilot project in Pakistan which showed that labour and chemical safety are often treated separately in textile mills. He emphasized the need to focus on reducing daily exposure, not just on avoiding incidents, and urged a lifecycle approach to chemical safety, from procurement to disposal.

Mariano Piñeyrua (TraceSurfer) shared an example of a regionally-grounded approach to improving traceability through digital product passports, designed specifically for the emerging markets in Latin America. By allowing verified collaborators across the supply chain to upload data, the system helps bridge information gaps and support compliance with emerging regulations. As Piñeyrua emphasized, "*just having a username and password is a*

huge challenge," highlighting the need for user-friendly and cost-effective tools that empower SMEs and farmers to meet traceability and transparency requirements.

Keima Gardiner (Trinidad and Tobago) presented a unique national initiative targeting chemical pollution in Carnival costume production, an important cultural and economic activity in the country. She explained that Carnival generates about 4.5% of the country's textile waste. "*That's just for two days in one city*," she emphasized, referring to the 68,000 masqueraders involved each year. Trinidad and Tobago, supported by the GEF, is developing a circular business model that includes a take-back system, laboratory testing, and a sustainable sourcing code of practice. The session closed with remarks from Agustín Harte (Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions – BRS). He highlighted the need to address hazardous substances through a lifecycle approach and called for strengthened traceability, regulation of transboundary textile waste flows, and urgent action to prevent toxic recycling.

Further Discussion Points

Highlights from breakout groups – Session 2: Following the panel discussions in session 1, the participants were divided into three working groups for further in-depth discussions around specific themes.

Transparency, Data and Traceability

The discussion centred around the structural and systemic challenges of achieving chemical transparency and traceability across the textile value chain. Participants highlighted the critical gap in infrastructure investment. While international support often funds training or technical assistance, there is little financing for the "hard systems" such as laboratory equipment or digital platforms needed to generate, analyse, and share chemical data. Even when infrastructure is available, participants noted the reluctance of stakeholders to share data due to confidentiality concerns and a lack of standardized language or taxonomies. This creates major barriers to interoperability between systems and regions.

DPPs and broader digital product information systems were seen as promising tools to enable traceability and facilitate downstream actions such as recycling, consumer engagement, and EPR schemes. However, without proper incentives (financial, regulatory or reputational) companies may be unwilling to act. Finally, the group emphasized the need for audience-specific communication and public engagement. Scientific data alone is insufficient unless it is translated and contextualized for different users, whether companies, consumers, or informal workers in waste management.

Three collaborative actions were proposed: developing a harmonized global taxonomy of chemicals used in textiles; creating multistakeholder innovation platforms for sustainability by design; and establishing systems to track transboundary movement of textile waste and its chemical content.

Occupational and Community Health and Safety

Participants emphasized the importance of embedding occupational health in all aspects of the Industry Sector Programme for the textiles sector. The discussion reviewed key tools and frameworks such as ILO Conventions 161 and 155, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and global trade agreements addressing supply chain responsibility. While these provide useful guidance, participants noted ongoing challenges such as informal labour conditions, lack of enforcement, and inconsistent application across geographies. The ILO's Code of Practice for the textile, leather, and footwear industries (2022) was highlighted as a valuable resource on training programs. However, participants stressed the need for better monitoring and evaluation, including measuring training uptake and implementing robust inspection systems. Accessibility remained a concern, especially for vulnerable workers in informal or remote settings.

In terms of financing, initiatives like the Bangladesh and Pakistan Accords were cited as examples of public-private partnerships where brands contribute to funding factory upgrades, inspections, and training. A key obstacle remains the pressure on suppliers caused by low prices demanded by global brands, which reduces their capacity to invest in worker health and safety.

Finally, the group called for collaborative action to secure more global framework agreements between employers and global unions, and to promote tripartite engagement at the national level.

Chemicals of Concern and their replacement

The discussion in this group focused on identifying, reducing, and eliminating chemicals of concern (CoCs) across the entire textile value chain. Participants recommended the creation of a consolidated list of priority CoCs, based on chemically intensive stages and dominant materials in textile production. Identifying safer alternatives is critical to prevent regrettable substitutions, and where alternatives do not yet exist, the mitigation hierarchy should be applied while further research is encouraged.

The group discussed current methodologies used by companies and industry initiatives to identify priority chemicals. These approaches are embedded in frameworks such as the Stockholm POPs list, REACH SVHCs, ZDHC MRSL, Oeko-Tex, Bluesign, Cradle to Cradle, GOTS, GreenScreen, PAN's Highly Hazardous Pesticides list, the SIN List from ChemSec, and the Chemical Footprint Project. A major advantage of this diversity is that these methodologies address different stakeholders and cover impacts on human health and the environment throughout the product lifecycle. However, the diversity of approaches also leads to fragmentation and limited comparability between regions and sectors.

To address this, the group suggested consolidating the various lists and the criteria behind them to harmonize the identification of priority CoCs. This would align methods across stakeholders and regulatory systems, helping to close major global gaps in chemical safety practices.

4. Additional Events (not including masterclasses and other events)

4.1 Unlocking the Construction-Chemicals Connection

Key Messages / Takeaways

- Chemicals in construction require a life-cycle approach. Chemicals are present at every stage of a building's life, from raw material extraction to end-of-life disposal. This poses risks to human health and the environment. A life-cycle assessment (LCA) and supporting tools (like EPDs, HPDs, SDS) are essential for informed decision-making and safer material choices.
- Transparency and traceability are essential but challenging. Improving chemical transparency across supply chains is difficult due to complex value chains, confidentiality concerns, and limited supplier cooperation. Solutions include third-party validation, non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), and building trust through long-term collaboration.
- Public policy and legal frameworks such as environmental regulations and incentives (e.g. tax exemption) are key to accelerating the adoption of safer and more sustainable construction practices.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

- Buildings last for a long time and so do the chemicals in the construction materials. The use of unsafe materials will risk creating legacy issues. There is a need for a systemic change in construction towards safer materials in construction. The technical challenge is crucial and ongoing innovation, finance and private sector engagement is essential.
- Policymaking and enforcement are essential. Industry leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration are key enablers.
- There is a need to enhance the capacity of developing countries to regulate and enforce these issues. Stronger integration with initiatives like the GFC and the Global Alliance on Buildings and Construction to advance development and implementation. There should be consideration of the development of an Industry Sector Programme on construction.

Further Discussion Points

- SMEs need support in switching to safer alternatives. While large companies can invest in R&D and supply chain collaboration, SMEs face technical and financial barriers. Access to funding, centralized systems for reporting, and technology-sharing partnerships (e.g., with universities or larger firms) are critical to enable safer chemical use across the industry.
- Traceability and transparency in materials are critical. There is a need for greater public access to environmental information. Investing in R&D, enhancing laboratory

capacity, and developing reliable labeling systems (e.g. via QR codes) are vital to improve transparency and accountability.

4.2 Integrating Occupational Health and Safety in Sector-Specific Programmes

Key Messages / Takeaways

- Hazardous chemicals pose significant threats to the health and safety of workers across all industries, supply chains and economic sectors, emphasizing the need for urgent action.
- *Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a foundational pillar in the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals*; therefore, it should be comprehensively integrated within all implementation programmes.
- Active involvement of all stakeholders in the world of work is key, including governments, workers, and employers.

Priority Actions and Recommendations

- Suggested collaborative activities included: active engagement of the labour sector in all specific Industry Sector Programmes.
- Identified opportunities to build momentum for the Programme and to engage additional stakeholders were: conduct a mapping exercise of the existing activities in the labour sector aligning with the GFC and use the momentum built in the development of healthcare, textiles, and electronics sector implementation programmes to advance the OSH agenda.

Further Discussion Points

- Occupational safety and health must be treated as a non-negotiable design element in all sectoral implementation programmes. Integration should occur at the earliest stages of programme design, with inclusion in the ToR, action plans, and monitoring.
- Textiles, electronics, and healthcare each present distinct OSH hazards that must be addressed through sector specific strategies.
- Effective chemical management is incomplete without worker protection. OSH should be integrated across the full chemical lifecycle, from procurement and production to end-of-life, within all IPs to ensure that chemical risk reduction is holistic.
- Chemical literacy remains a critical gap. Many workers do not know which substances they are using or their health effects. Building awareness and knowledge is a prerequisite for responsible chemical management.
- Informal sector workers are often the most exposed yet least protected. IPs must go beyond formal enterprises and include approaches to extend OSH protections to workers in informal or unregulated supply chains.
- Many exposed workers are women. Programmes must consider gender specific risks and ensure equal access to training, representation, and protective measures.

- Various OSH standards and recommendations already exist. What is often missing is the bridge to application: operational guidance, funding, institutional capacities, and coordination mechanisms to ensure these tools are used where they are needed most.
- Implementation will require human and institutional resources, including inspectorates, monitoring systems, and budgeted coordination mechanisms to ensure follow-through on OSH integration.

For further information:

Further information regarding the multistakeholder day and the topics discussed during the OEWG meeting can be found on the GFC OEWG Website.[3]

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[3] https://www.unep.org/events/conference/open-ended-working-group-oewg-global-framework-chemicals