

Proposals & Recommendations on the Current Documentations for OEWG-3

The third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (OEWG-3)

This document is submitted on behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP. The CYMG is the formal children and youth engagement mechanism to the UN Environment Programme and a movement of children, youth and youth organizations from different parts of the world working for environmental conservation.

This document is a compilation of inputs gathered from the constituency as a result of multiple rounds of consultations held by the Chemicals and Waste Working Group of CYMG that entailed several months of consultations, written inputs complemented by online consultations sessions took place between January and May 2024. Thus, this document reflects the perspectives and priorities of children and youth from different regions, communities and backgrounds.

This submission contains three sections:

- The first section elaborates on the constituency's perspectives on the text proposed, along with our **agreed textual proposals**.
- The second section contains a **policy brief** for the promotion of the inclusion of youth in the panel.
- The third section condenses the main **priorities** of the constituency in heading towards SPP-OEWG 3.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)

A. Scope, objective and functions of the panel

(e) Capacity-building

Proposal 1: Provide capacity-building through all the functions of the panel and facilitate technology transfer, in particular to developing countries, to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels, including activities to ensure effective, geographically balanced and gender-responsive participation of scientists in the assessments of the panel, strengthen data generation capacity, enhance knowledge and skills that will support country infrastructure and human capacity, and facilitate connection and matchmaking of capacity-related needs and potential solutions

Proposal 2: Build capacity to support the functions and work of the panel in order to strengthen the science-policy interface for sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

CYMG Proposal:

[Facilitate capacity-building to support the panel's functions, particularly in developing countries, through collaborative activities including technology transfer, skill development, strategic planning and financial support, innovative solutions, and stronger science-backed policy formation, analysis and implementation for the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution.]

The effective implementation of the future panel can only be achieved when it incorporates effective Capacity Building included under the scope, objective and functions of the panel. At the previous OEWG sessions, several GAPS were identified in the IPBES and the IPCC inclusive of a lack of comprehensive capacity building for its members. Furthermore, the mandate of improving the capacity of the Member States and stakeholders at all levels in the decision-making process of the current environmental and health issues through strengthening the science-policy interface is also highlighted in the UNEA-6 Ministerial Declaration Paragraph 16. This underscores the importance of ensuring the capacity-building is guaranteed and accessible to all related parties.

Therefore, CYMG reiterates that this core aspect will help build the human capital of our regions to address several issues related to science and the availability of data and/or information to help support the need that needs to be done.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2

B. Operating principles of the panel

(i) [Incorporating [a human rights-based approach],[the respect and protection of human rights as a cross-cutting principle,] including [prevention-based approach] by recognizing [that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity.] [the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to science, **[intergenerational equity,]** the importance of informed participation, and](del) the need to give special attention to [those



populations](del) [groups and communities] most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution[, including from the perspective of racial and social equality];](del)

[(i) alt Incorporating the need to give special attention to those populations most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution.]

[(i) alt bis Incorporating a human rights-based approach, including by recognizing that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity.]

[(i) alt ter Incorporating [a human rights-based approach](del), [the respect and protection of human rights as a cross-cutting principle] including by recognizing the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to science, [**intergenerational equity**] the importance of informed participation, and the need to give special attention to [those populations](del) [groups and communities] most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution [including from the perspective of racial and social equality];]

(o) Integrating gender equality [and equity](del) in all relevant aspects of its work;

CYMG Proposals:

[(i) alt Incorporating the need to give special attention to those populations most vulnerable to adverse impacts from chemicals, waste and pollution(*, taking into account the principle of intergenerational equity.*)]

[(i) alt bis Incorporating a human rights-based approach, including by recognizing that the implementation of the sound management of chemicals and waste and prevention of pollution contributes to the full enjoyment of human rights and human well-being and dignity(*, and intergenerational equity.*)]

(o) Integrating gender equality [and equity](del) (*and intergenerational equity*) in all relevant aspects of its work;

Recognizing the importance of ensuring fairness in the developmental and environmental needs of the current and future generations i.e the unborn, the children, the youth and the elderly, our position demands that the principle of an intergenerational equity lens should be integrated into the Operating principles of the panel. It aims to ensure the panel's structure and work reflect intergenerational perspectives and foster active engagement of children and youth in sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. Furthermore, it guides the panel's decisions to address the needs and rights of both current and future generations fairly, by considering the long-term impacts on future generations, leading to more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Intergenerational equity is a cornerstone of sustainable development, emphasizing our responsibility to bequeath a healthy environment for future generations. It underpins our collective commitment to policies that not only address current environmental challenges but also safeguard the long-term stability of our planet for current and future generations.

To uphold the rights of those who will inherit the Earth, we must prioritise sustainable practices and integrate them into the core of our governance structures. This includes adopting comprehensive environmental protection policies, and enforcing regulations that prevent pollution and further the sound management of chemicals and waste.



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(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)

C. Institutional arrangements for the Panel

III. Committees and subsidiary bodies

Interdisciplinary Expert Committee

18. [Representatives of non-governmental participants as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate as ex officio members in Interdisciplinary Expert Committee meetings. The representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the Panel.(6)]

(6) Guidelines covering the nomination process and length of service of these representatives will be provided for in the rules of procedure. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing five representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1 *(Draft rules of procedure)*

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)

Interdisciplinary Expert Committee: Rule 22

44. The membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be based on equal representation, with five members nominated by each of the five United Nations regions and five members nominated by observers of the governing body of the Panel.

CYMG Proposals:

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2 *(Compilation of proposals for establishing a science-policy panel)*

18. [Representatives of *(Major Groups and Stakeholders)* as well as the Chair of the United Nations Environment Management Group may participate as ex officio members in Interdisciplinary Expert Committee meetings. The representatives of non-governmental participants are elected by and from non-governmental participants engaged in the work of the Panel.(6)]

(6) Guidelines covering the nomination process and length of service of these representatives will be provided for in the rules of procedure. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to consider electing *(nine representatives to serve in this role one each from the major groups with relevant expertise to the work programme)* five representatives to serve in this role, one each from health, environment, industry, trade union and public interest groups.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.1 *(Draft rules of procedure)*

9. Subsidiary bodies (membership, operation, election of members)

44. The membership of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will be based on equal representation, with five members nominated by each of the five United Nations regions and five *(nine)* members nominated by observers of the governing body of the Panel.

Establishment of a Youth Expert Advisory Group to function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.



It is imperative to ensure that the panel's functions including the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee reflect inclusivity by referencing Major Groups and other Stakeholders from Agenda 21 of the Rio 1992 Summit, enhancing the scope of expertise and perspectives in the work of the committee. This approach ultimately leads to more comprehensive, robust, and sustainable outcomes that consider the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders, including both current and future generations.

The establishment of the panel can only be effective through the recognition that different expert groups are needed to address both policy-relevant and scientific issues. As such, we welcome and appreciate the recognition of the role of subsidiary bodies and expert teams in the procedures. CYMG as one of the Major Groups recalls and affirms the proposal of establishing the interdisciplinary expert committee engaging youth experts in our previous engagement in OEWG2; pursuant to which we request that a *Youth Expert Advisory Group to function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.*

Establishment of the Youth Expert Advisory Group [CYMG Proposal] :

Mandate:

- The Youth Expert Advisory Group will function as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee.
- The Youth representative in the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee will represent the Youth Expert Advisory Group and communicate the group's outcomes.
- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall provide insights into the concerns, priorities, and perspectives of the younger generation.
- The group will ensure that the voices and needs of youth are integrated into the panel's work programs, supporting the governing body and other subsidiary bodies.

Composition:

- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall consist of youth experts from diverse disciplines relevant to the panel's mandate.
- The Youth Expert Advisory Group shall operate with a focus on inclusion from vulnerable and marginalised communities, ensuring equal representation across regions, geographies, and genders.
- Members shall be selected to ensure balanced representation in terms of geographical distribution, gender equality, and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Tasks:

Contribution to the Work Programme:

- Contribute to the work programme and assessments by supporting research, assessments, horizon scanning, and other related functions.
- Provide insights and recommendations on issues that particularly affect the younger generations, contributing to policy development and decision-making processes.
- Offer perspectives on emerging trends, innovations, and challenges relevant to the field.
- Assist in monitoring, evaluation and reassessment of policies and priorities based on implementation of the work programme

Engagement and Outreach:

- Facilitate engagement with youth networks and communities to gather broad input and feedback on the panel's initiatives.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the panel's work among young people and encourage their active participation.



Capacity Building:

- Support the production of deliverables tailored to younger generations to ensure accessible language and build capacity.
- Develop and implement capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of young experts and early career professionals in relevant areas.
- Organise workshops, seminars, and training sessions to foster knowledge exchange and professional development.

By demanding the institutionalisation of the Youth Expert Advisory Group, we aim to ensure that the perspectives of younger and future generations are effectively incorporated into the work of the panel, contributing to more inclusive, forward-looking, and sustainable outcomes.

UNEP/SPP-CWP/OEWG.3/2/Add.4

(Draft procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables)

Annex I (Roles and responsibilities for the preparation of assessments)

In addition to the roles described in the annex I (including *Co-chairs, coordinating lead authors, Lead authors, contributing authors, Review editors, expert, and government reviewers*) CYMG proposes the inclusion of the **Fellows** role to provide an avenue for early career professionals, young researchers, and youth experts to actively engage with the assessment process.

- **Fellows:** Introducing Fellows to the Roles and responsibilities for the preparation of assessments brings a dynamic and innovative edge to the assessment process. These young experts, (under 35 years old), provide vital support to authors through assisting research, managing citations and references, visual development, and among other tasks. Their inclusion offers a dual advantage: Fellows gain invaluable learning and networking opportunities, enhancing their professional growth and preparing them to carry out future cycles of assessments, while the panel benefits from their fresh perspectives and contemporary insights. By interacting with experts from all over the world, Fellows ensure that the viewpoints and concerns of younger generations are integrated into the assessment, enriching the panel's work with diverse and forward-thinking contributions.



POLICY BRIEF:

PROMOTING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACES

INTRODUCTION

Science-policy interfaces are social processes that encompass relations between scientists and other actors in the policy process, enabling the exchange, coevolution, and collaborative construction of knowledge to enhance decision-making.¹ In this context, youth are critical stakeholders and partners, bringing their unique knowledge, competencies, and lived experiences to strengthen environmental science and policy. Young people, with their unique dispositions, perceptions, ingenuity, and creativity, bring innovations, new energy, and perspectives that, when combined with existing knowledge and tools, make significant and transformative contributions toward addressing complex global challenges.² Harnessing youth voices as a force for change can lead to a more holistic understanding of science-policy issues, thereby increasing the policy and societal relevance of science-policy interfaces.³

The ongoing negotiations on the Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution present a unique opportunity to redesign the narrative around youth engagement. The new panel has the potential to overcome the limitations of existing science-policy interfaces by enabling meaningful youth engagement and fostering intergenerational partnerships.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Youth, who comprise nearly half of the global population, remain significantly underrepresented in the science-policy interface. Young people possess a diverse range of knowledge, skills, and lived experiences that can greatly benefit policy design, implementation, and evaluation. Establishing a Youth Experts Advisory Group can make the new panel more inclusive, responsive, and impactful, bridging the gap between the scientific community and the lived realities of young people.
2. The new panel should learn from the best practices of youth engagement adopted by existing interfaces while being innovative in its approach to addressing the persistent barriers, including limited knowledge, awareness, accessibility, inclusivity and participation.
3. The stakeholder engagement strategy for the new panel should be developed through a public consultation process that actively engages young people. By involving youth as equal partners in designing the engagement strategy, the panel can better understand and address their specific needs and expertise while also fostering trust, ownership, and commitment among young people as key stakeholders.

BEST PRACTICES

This policy brief identifies and highlights best practices of youth engagement from existing science-policy interfaces that the new panel should adopt. The combination of these practices can ensure that the panel leverages the unique knowledge, skills, and lived experiences that youth bring to the table, ultimately strengthening the credibility, relevance, and impact of its global assessments.

1

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38115/UNEP%4050_report_ENGLISH_FINAL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

2

<https://iucncongress2020.org/sites/www.iucncongress>

2020.org/files/page/files/intergens_report_review_youth_engagement_and_intergeneration_al_partnership_across_iucn_06042021.pdf

3

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/26395916.2022.2085807>



CASE 1: INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

1. **Broadened access through existing networks:** Organisations with observer status at WMO, UNEP, and UNFCCC are automatically considered IPCC observers upon request, without the need to submit additional documentation. This simplifies the process for youth organisations to participate in IPCC activities.
2. **Scholarship Programme for Early-Career Researchers:** The Programme supports early-career scientists from developing countries in pursuing doctoral studies on climate adaptation and mitigation. This fosters their academic and professional growth while empowering them to contribute to global efforts to address climate change.
3. **Chapter Scientists:** Early-career research scientists provide technical and logistical support to author teams with technical aspects of chapter development, with opportunities to advance to roles as Contributing and Lead Authors in subsequent assessments. This helps gain state-of-the-art knowledge in the field, unique insights into the IPCC assessment process and valuable networks that could assist in future career development.

CASE 2: INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)

1. **Recognition of self-organised networks of stakeholders:** IPBES recognises self-organised networks of stakeholders, including youth groups, which can co-lead preparations for the IPBES Stakeholder Day(s). This inclusion ensures that youth voices are integral to the discussions, elevating their role as key stakeholders in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation efforts.

2. **Youth Workshop:** Youth and early-career individuals from universities, NGOs, and policy organisations can participate in the annual workshop. This facilitates youth engagement with IPBES and builds their capacity to contribute effectively to its processes and products.
3. **Fellowship Programme for Early-Career Individuals:** Early-career researchers working on biodiversity and ecosystem services can participate in IPBES assessments. Fellows gain valuable experience and mentorship from leading experts, enhancing their capacity to contribute to future assessments and promoting IPBES work in their home countries.

CASE 3: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK (GEO)

1. **Advisory Groups:** The Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP can nominate representatives to the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group and Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group, contributing their policy and scientific expertise to the process. This ensures youth perspectives are included in the GEO process.
2. **Fellows Programme for Youth:** Young experts support the GEO authors with research, citations, references and visual development, bringing forward-looking perspectives, community realities, and technological literacy. Alumni from past assessment cycles can become leading authors for new assessments, showcasing the programme's impact on developing future leaders.
3. **GEO for Youth:** A one-stop-shop for young people to understand the state of the environment, written by youth for youth. It aims to inform, engage and educate young people, empowering them to take informed environmental action.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While best practices exist that facilitate youth engagement, there are still a number of barriers that limit youth participation and representation in science-policy interfaces. The new panel should address these challenges by consulting with youth during the design of the stakeholder engagement strategy. This approach will better address the specific needs and expertise of young people, fostering trust, ownership, and commitment among them as key stakeholders.

Barriers to youth engagement	Policy recommendations
<i>Knowledge and awareness</i>	
Limited understanding of the science-policy interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide educational resources and training to enhance youth understanding of the science-policy interface and empower youth to engage ● Replicate models like GEO for Youth to educate young people about the science-policy interface, environmental issues and informed actions
Lack of awareness of engagement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amplify outreach and disseminate information about engagement opportunities through youth-focused channels and networks ● Build partnerships with existing youth-led organisations, universities, and other networks to effectively reach and engage young people
<i>Access, inclusion and participation</i>	
Complex formal accreditation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognise Major Group modalities for stakeholder engagement. ● Grant observer status to organisations already accredited by UNEA
Limited youth representation, especially those from marginalised backgrounds or with non-traditional scientific expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct active outreach to ensure the representation of diverse voices in science policy discussions. ● Recognise the value of all ages by allowing observer organisations to nominate minors (anyone below 18 years of age) to participate in the panel's activities. ● Establish a Youth Experts Advisory Group to amplify the voices of youth experts and early-career professionals
Focus on established expertise, leaving less room for fresh perspectives and innovative solutions proposed by young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise selection criteria for youth participation in advisory groups and fellowship programmes to embrace alternative forms of experience or expertise, such as lived experiences, community knowledge, or citizen science contributions. ● Allow self-nominations to broaden access and ensure representation from a wider spectrum of youth voices
Lack of funding for youth engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocate dedicated funding and provide financial support to facilitate youth participation in the panel's activities
Lack of capacity-building support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and offer comprehensive capacity-building programmes specifically designed for young people to equip them with the necessary skills for meaningful participation in the panel's activities and beyond. These programmes should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth workshops and training that focus on scientific communication, policy analysis, advocacy, and public engagement. - Fellowship programmes that enable youth to contribute to assessment reports and gain hands-on experience. - Mentorship programmes that connect experienced professionals with young individuals for guidance, support, and skill development - Scholarship programmes that allow outstanding young individuals to pursue doctoral studies on issues of chemicals, waste and pollution.



CYMG Priorities for OEWG3: Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution

Derived from the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG)'s intersessional work ahead of OEWG3, these priorities reflect a collective effort to address the challenges of establishing a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution. The insights presented here distil the essence of the Demands of children and youth, outlining clear and concise priorities that emphasise inclusivity, innovation, meaningful participation, and adaptability in navigating the complexities of our global environmental landscape.

1. **Prioritise Intergenerational Equity:** Integrate intergenerational equity into the existing operating principles, ensuring that the Panel's structure and work incorporate intergenerational perspectives and foster active engagement of children and youth.
2. **Inclusive Plenary Functions to ensure multi-stakeholder collaboration:** Ensure that the functions of the plenary reflect inclusivity by referencing Major Groups and other Stakeholders recognized by the agenda 21 of the Rio 1992 Summit, ensuring a broad representation of expertise and perspectives in the panel. The recognition of these well-established stakeholder groups shall also address the aspect of multistakeholderism by seeking collaboration partnerships, coordination and synergies with the major groups which comprises of people from academia, industries and businesses, major groups, intergovernmental bodies, and other stakeholders to enhance knowledge sharing and cooperation, foster innovation, and strengthen collective action.
3. **Establish a Youth Expert Advisory Group:** Institutionalise the Youth Expert Advisory Group as a sub-committee of the Interdisciplinary Expert Committee to integrate the voices of youth experts and early career professionals in the panel's work programme, to facilitate engagement and outreach with youth communities, and to ensure the production of inclusive, forward-looking, and sustainable outcomes. This group should have equal representation across regions, and genders, with a specific focus on inclusion from vulnerable and marginalised communities.
4. **Embed Human Rights-Based Approach:** Adopt a human rights-based approach to the management of chemicals and waste and preventing pollution by recognizing, respecting, and meaningfully documenting and incorporating the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, while addressing existing and mitigating the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by communities in health, conflicts, and economic factors.
5. **Flexible and Iterative Approach:** Emphasise the need for a flexible approach, allowing continuous learning and adaptation to new evidence, rapid technological advancements, shifts in information consumption trends, and changing circumstances to address the evolving nature of global challenges.



6. **Complementarity with Specific Principles:** Support specific principles on transparency, gender equality, accountability, and capacity building while ensuring that they complement and reinforce each other in the overall framework.
7. **Incorporation of the principle of Conflict of Interest:** Ensure that the scientific evidence presented in this panel, the policy outcomes of this panel, and the implementation of such policies are not guided by entities, organisations or groups that stand to gain from the unsound management of chemicals and waste, or from poor implementation of sustainable policies.
8. **Capacity Building and Awareness:** Ensure active outreach and awareness raising to inform and educate broader audiences about the Panel’s work and the impact of its findings. This would foster a deeper understanding of the issues among diverse communities and build capacity for meaningful participation by tailoring information communication approaches to the specific needs of each audience and targeted community.
9. **Flexible Outreach Mechanism:** Develop a flexible outreach mechanism, leveraging sustainable and ethical technological advancements and learning from successful science policy platforms and panels, such as GEO. This includes producing different forms of final outputs with accessible language to cater to the diverse perspectives of stakeholders, informed by the assessments, and dissemination of the same to all stakeholders affected by them through effective capacity-building.
10. **Focus on Vulnerable Communities:** Prioritise finding solutions and capacity-building efforts for communities in vulnerable situations, with a specific focus on considering intersectional factors that contribute to vulnerability, ensuring that these communities receive the necessary support and resources, including financial and technical assistance, to effectively address and manage challenges associated with unsound management of chemicals, waste, and pollution.

Find out more about CYMG's engagement with the SPP OEWG:

<https://www.cymgenvironment.net/youth-oeWG-spp>

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