



For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste

3rd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability – Implementing the Global Framework on Chemicals

5-6 September 2024 – virtual event

Concept Note

About the 3rd Berlin Forum

The 3rd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability will be hosted by HE Steffi Lemke, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection and co-hosted by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals ([IOMC](#)) on 5-6 September 2024 as a high-level virtual event. The overall goal of the Forum is to foster knowledge-sharing and strengthen global multi-stakeholder collaboration and action to address the global pollution crisis by focusing on and fostering implementation of the [Global Framework on Chemicals: For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#) (GFC).

Global Framework on Chemicals: A groundbreaking display of stakeholder collaboration

The *Global Framework on Chemicals: For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste* was adopted in Bonn at the High-level Segment of the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), held in September 2023 in Bonn, Germany. It represents a landmark achievement of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral collaboration, involving representatives from governments, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector, civil society, labour and the scientific community.

At the heart of the GFC are [five Strategic Objectives and 28 Targets](#) that guide stakeholders at all levels to take measurable actions to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste. Other important negotiated outcomes of ICCM5 include the high-level [Bonn Declaration for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#) and [12 Resolutions](#).

By endorsing the Bonn Declaration, stakeholders expressed their high-level commitment to actively implement the GFC. Through [Resolution V/8](#) on “Implementation Arrangements”, the Conference further called upon “Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and organizations and stakeholders representing civil society and the private sector to comprehensively implement the GFC as a framework for national and international action and cooperation on chemicals and waste”. It also invites the IOMC to play a facilitating and coordinating role in encouraging the engagement of key economic and industrial sectors.

The 3rd Berlin Forum: An opportunity to take stock and foster GFC implementation

Close to a year after the adoption of the GFC, the 3rd Berlin Forum provides a unique opportunity for high-level stakeholders from diverse sectors to take stock and galvanise political momentum for advancing the implementation of the framework. Questions addressed by high-level speakers and participants at the Forum will include:

- How can we mobilise political commitment in key sectors affected by chemical pollution that are crucial for implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)?
- Who needs to take action to address prevalent gaps in regulatory, institutional and human resource capacities to effectively manage chemicals? Which actions could these be?
- How can industry stakeholders along value chains tackle GFC implementation? How can good practices and front-runner action be scaled up?
- What are opportunities for key stakeholders in the public and private finance sector to galvanise and steer investment towards green and sustainable chemistry solutions?
- What is the vision for how GFC implementation can be organised? What are possible elements of the proposed “implementation programmes”, how can they be prepared, and what could they involve?
- How do partnerships effectively support GFC implementation, and what strategies can be employed to foster, scale-up and replicate these partnerships? Would a new partnership initiative for GFC implementation be useful and if so, why and how?

Date, time and participation:

The 3rd Berlin Forum will take place on **5-6 September 2024**. The event will be held as a two-day virtual event, with 2.5-3 hour sessions scheduled each day, held early afternoon CEST to enable broad global participation. A draft programme is attached at the end of this document.

All GFC stakeholders, other interested stakeholders and the media are welcome to participate in the 3rd Berlin Forum as audience members, and will have access to interactive elements in each session by following the live stream.

The forum will be livestreamed here: <https://www.bmu.de/en/live-broadcast>

Facilitation and opportunities to intervene:

The 3rd Berlin Forum will be moderated by Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions, and co-moderated by Minu Hemmati, independent consultant and expert in multi stakeholder processes for sustainable development.

Interventions at the 3rd Berlin Forum will be made by government ministers, high-level representatives of international and regional organisations and stakeholders from the private sector, representatives of workers and trade unions, science and academia, NGOs,

advocates for women and gender equality, children and youth, as well as representatives of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The programme provides for two types of interventions:

- High-level speakers invited by the organisers to give keynote addresses or join panel discussions in a specific session.
- High-level participants who received a general official invitation to the 3rd Berlin Forum with the opportunity to give a two-minute statement in a session of their choice. Details on how to register for an ad hoc statement are specified in the general invitation letter.

Forum topics:

Addressing the global pollution crisis by enhancing global chemicals and waste management requires stakeholder actions in multiple sectors. The 3rd Berlin Forum will therefore discuss several approaches to raising awareness and advancing the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals by focusing on:

- Fostering commitment in key sectors that play an important role in achieving change
- Creating links to and engaging with other sustainable development fora
- Strengthening legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities
- Transforming product value and supply chains
- Identifying and scaling up innovative financing

Session descriptions:

Opening and setting the scene

The Forum will be opened by HE Steffi Lemke, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection.

After that, a high-level “Setting the Scene Panel” will present perspectives on GFC implementation by heads of participating organisations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and other high-level decision-makers. The panel will focus on the importance of fostering multi-sectoral commitment and collaboration in GFC implementation in key sectors that are responsible for and/or are particularly affected by chemical pollution, and therefore play an important role in achieving change.

Session 1: Creating links to and engaging with other sustainable development fora to enhance GFC implementation

Chemistry and chemical products affect many aspects of our economies, societies, environment, and well-being. Identifying opportunities and managing possible adverse effects of chemicals, and dealing with potential trade-offs along value chains, requires awareness and

action by decision-makers in various fora dealing with sustainable development. Strategic objective E of the GFC calls for addressing these links. This session will highlight the crucial role that sound chemicals management plays in addressing key environment and sustainable development issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, plastic pollution, and broader sustainable development goals, such as gender equality, health, and education. Specific examples and opportunities will be featured to forge links, create synergies and promote collaboration.

Session 2: Strengthening legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms and capacities

About 100 countries, many of them in the Global South, still lack basic and effective legal and institutional frameworks for the sound management of chemicals. Addressing these gaps is the intention of strategic objectives A and E of the GFC. This session will take a critical look at why progress on putting in place basic capacities has been lacking and what type of fresh thinking and approaches may be needed to fill prevalent gaps. Topics may include possible model legal approaches to support interested countries, ways to induce policy shifts towards pollution prevention, and scaling up coordinated international funding and support for capacity development.

Session 3: Transforming product value and supply chains: taking stock of and scaling up sustainable solutions by industry and other stakeholders

Chemical production and use along value chains is growing globally, with chemicals continuously released into the environment in significant quantities. Under strategic objective D of the GFC, major economic and industry sectors are called upon to develop and implement, by 2030, sustainable chemical and waste management strategies that identify priority chemicals of concern, as well as standards and measures that reduce their impact and, where feasible, reduce their use and consumption along value chains. This session brings together high-level decision-makers from industry and other stakeholder groups to present and review relevant industry initiatives and identify opportunities for leveraging and scaling up action throughout value chains.

Session 4: Strengthening innovative financing for GFC implementation: exploring novel business models and the role of financial investors

Transitioning towards the safe and sustainable management of chemicals requires significant reallocation of financial resources and strategic investments. In the Bonn Declaration, all stakeholders showed their commitment to financial support, including from domestic sources, regional and international development cooperation and assistance, existing funds and mechanisms (i.e. the new GFCF, GEF, etc.), as well as from the private sector and philanthropy. In the finance sector, adopting a proactive approach to chemicals management is essential for reducing litigation risks, addressing regulatory complexities and maintaining a strong

reputation. Equally significant, developments in sustainable chemistry present financial institutions with innovative and promising investment prospects. Under strategic objective D, target D3 specifically calls upon the private sector, including the finance sector, to incorporate strategies and policies to implement the sound management of chemicals and waste in its finance approaches and business models and to apply internationally recognised reporting standards. This session will discuss the interface of private and public sector financing to facilitate the transition to safe and sustainable chemistry and opportunities to scale up relevant initiatives.

Closing session: Mobilising further commitment for GFC implementation

The Berlin Forum is only one of several milestones and initiatives to help achieve implementation of the GFC and raise awareness for the urgency to address the global pollution crisis. The closing session will feature reflections by selected speakers on how the momentum and insights generated by the Forum can be taken up at various levels, from local to global, and by diverse stakeholder groups.

Context of the 3rd Berlin Forum:

Pollution, including pollution caused by chemicals and waste, has become the third planetary crisis threatening our future, alongside climate change and biodiversity loss. As early as 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, chemical pollution and waste was declared a major global threat. In response, heads of state and government agreed to reach a world in which “chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment” by 2020 (WSSD 2002).

As an important follow-up to help achieve the 2020 Goal, the 1st International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM1), held in Dubai in 2006, adopted the multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). Recognising that the 2020 Goal would not be reached, ICCM4 in 2015 launched an intersessional process to negotiate a future agreement for SAICM and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 at ICCM5. With Germany in the role as ICCM5 Presidency, this crucial negotiation process was finalised in 2023 in Bonn with adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals– For a Planet free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste.

Chemicals and waste management is an issue of global scale requiring urgent action. Beyond the GFC, other UN conventions such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention underscore this fact, as do ILO Chemicals Convention 170, the FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management and resolutions from the World Health Assembly. The importance of the issue is also reflected in current negotiations to establish a Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention and a legally binding Plastics Agreement.

The GFC as a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral framework is a powerful platform for all actors to collaborate on achieving safe and sustainable chemicals and waste management. At

its centre are five strategic objectives, addressing key areas of action to achieve the vision of a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste, for a safe, healthy and sustainable future, and associated targets, 28 in total, which establish time-bound, sector- and stakeholder-specific actions for implementation.

The 1st Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability: Ambition and Action towards 2030 was held on 7-8 July 2021. Some fifty high-level speakers contributed to the Forum, including UN Secretary-General António Guterres, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Virginijus Sinkevičius, the EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, as well as ministers from many countries, executive heads of major intergovernmental organisations and leaders from the private sector and non-governmental organisations from all corners of the globe. Over 800 people from around the world registered for the livestreamed event. As host of the meeting, Germany was delighted by the level of interest and engagement.

The 2nd Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability – Just Transition towards a Pollution-free Planet was held in September 2023 in the run-up to ICCM5. The Forum was opened by Steffi Lemke, German Minister for the Environment, followed by opening statements from Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, and Svenja Schulze, German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development. Setting the scene, Richard Damania, the World Bank's Chief Economist of the Sustainable Development Practice Group gave a keynote speech about the cost of inaction on chemicals management. Over the course of two half-day segments, the 2nd Berlin Forum then focused on the contributions of the health, food, and labour sectors, and on the need for scientific, technical, social, economic, and financial innovations to overcome the pollution crisis and achieve just transition. A total of 53 high-level speakers from governments, international organisations such as UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, WFP, UNITAR, UNIDO, ILO, WTO, civil society and the private sector contributed to the forum.

About the IOMC and the GFC:

The IOMC was established in 1995 as an international coordinating group to promote sound chemicals management worldwide and, as of 2023, comprises ten participating organisations.¹ The vision of the IOMC is to shape a sustainable future through coordinated global action to achieve sound lifecycle management of chemicals and waste for healthy lives and the environment.

At and prior to ICCM5, the IOMC contributed substantially to the negotiation process and the final GFC text. As a result, the GFC document, ICCM5 Resolutions, and the Bonn Declaration make specific reference to IOMC and its participating organisations a total of 33 times.

¹ For more information: www.iomc.info. FAO, ILO, UNEP, UNIDO, WHO and OECD were first to join the IOMC in 1995, followed by UNITAR in 1997, the World Bank in 2010, UNDP in 2012, and the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions in 2023.

ICCM5 requested that intergovernmental organisations comprehensively implement the GFC as a framework for international action and cooperation on chemicals and waste. IOMC was specifically invited to develop Implementation Programmes (IPs) in close collaboration with stakeholders for consideration by the first International Conference in 2026. IOMC was also encouraged to undertake further activities in all areas related to this work during the intersessional period.

In March 2024, IOMC and its member organisations accepted this invitation to develop IPs, subject to funding becoming available, and most IOMC members have already indicated specific actions in support of IP development and announced their implementation actions towards GFC targets. In addition, some IOMC members have endorsed or acknowledged the GFC or are in the process of doing so.²

² To date, UNEA-6 acknowledged the GFC in March 2024, and the OECD Council adopted a declaration supporting the achievement of the strategic objectives and targets of the GFC in May 2024.