Today, the Youth Consultative Meeting (YCM) took place at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) ahead of the third session of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG-3). The OEWG-3 aims to develop proposals for a science-policy panel dedicated to the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution, which will be held from 17 to 21 June 2024.

During the YCM, initial presentations from CYMG highlighted outcomes from the intersessional period and introduced key youth priorities and policy asks. These priorities include prioritizing the principle of intergenerational equity, ensuring multi-stakeholder collaboration through inclusive plenary and SPP functions, establishing a Youth Expert Advisory Group, embedding a human rights-based approach, adopting a flexible and iterative approach, incorporating conflict of interest principles, and enhancing capacity building and awareness.

Key recommendations presented emphasized the establishment of a Youth Expert Advisory Group to enhance the new panel’s inclusivity, responsiveness, and impact by bridging the gap between the scientific community and the lived experiences of young people. Furthermore, the panel should incorporate best practices from existing interfaces while addressing barriers such as limited access to knowledge, awareness, inclusivity, and participation. The development of a stakeholder engagement strategy through a public consultation process actively involving young people was also highlighted.

Official opening remarks acknowledged the youth’s priorities and emphasized the necessity of addressing pollution and the unsound management of chemicals and waste, engaging youth, and developing stakeholder engagement mechanisms for the future science-policy panel through a public consultative process.

Speakers included:
- Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP
- Tessa Govers, Head of SPP OEWG Secretariat
- Laetitia Zobel, Program Management Officer, Civil Society Unit, Governance Affairs Office, UNEP
- Ana Paula Souza, Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
An informal youth preparatory meeting was held, featuring a briefing on UNEA Res 5/8, updates from OEWG SPP and key CWP processes, and breakout discussions on reviewing official documents, youth priorities, and policy stances, as well as logistical arrangements. Participants, both online and in-person, discussed various aspects of youth engagement, capacity-building functions, and incorporating intergenerational equity. Strategies were developed to ensure youth priorities are reflected in the official text.

The YCM concluded with a roundtable discussion titled "Towards a Youth Science-Policy Forum on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution," focusing on how youth engagement can be organized to support the future panel's work.

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