

Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Bureau meeting

Monday, 22 January 2024

15:00- 17:00 (GMT+3)

Online meeting

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair of the INC, H.E. Mr. Luis Vayas Valdivieso, welcomed Members of the INC Bureau and opened the meeting.
2. The meeting was attended by the following Members:
INC Chair: Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso (Ecuador);
African States: Mr. Cheikh Ndiaye Sylla (Senegal);
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan);
Eastern European States: Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia);
Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru);
Small-Island Developing States: Ms. Asha Challenger (Antigua and Barbuda);
Western European and Other States: Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden); Ms. Larke Williams (United States of America).
3. The Secretariat was represented by Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Executive Secretary.
4. In attendance for parts of agenda Item 2 was Ms. Cynthia Bainbridge, representative of INC-4 Host Country, Canada.
5. The INC Chair, Amb. Vayas Valdivieso, provided opening remarks, thanking the Bureau for their engagement and support at the Heads of Delegation meeting on 18 and 19 January. The INC Chair provided an overview of the agenda and informed that the Bureau would be joined by a representative of INC-4 Host Country, Canada, during the relevant agenda item. He indicated that he looked forward to hearing from the Bureau, and the importance of organizing an efficient INC-4. The Chair expressed intention of hearing further views on the modalities and potential scheduling of future HODs meetings.
6. The Executive Secretary, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, provided updates on documentation and results of the [INC-3 survey](#) in her opening remarks. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the revised draft text and an advance copy of the provisional agenda had been

uploaded to the INC-4 webpage. From recommendations of the survey, some feedback has already been taken on board in the preparations for INC-4. The Executive Secretary also informed that, as requested by some members of the Bureau, the Secretariat had undertaken research on contact group configurations and scheduling and stands by to share information with the Bureau.

7. The agenda was adopted by the Bureau.

Agenda Item 2: Planning the fourth session of the committee

a) Update on venue and logistics by the host country

8. A representative of INC-4 Host Country, Canada, was invited to update the Bureau on the preparations for the fourth session. The Bureau was informed that Canada is planning to hold a 'Partnership Day' event on 22 April, which may provide a good opportunity for engagement with observers and other stakeholders.
9. The Canadian Host Country Representative further informed that H.E. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Canada, will be hosting a Ministerial event on 28 February, on the margins of UNEA-6, in Nairobi. Invitations have been sent and a concept note along with an RSVP for attendance will be shared shortly. It was clarified that separate registration for the event was not necessary. The Ministerial event and Partnership Day were welcomed by the Bureau. The Bureau highlighted the importance of engaging constructively on challenging substantive topics and allowing for as many speakers as possible at the Ministerial event.
10. A Bureau member conveyed some of the issues experienced by the delegates from the region in relation to the visa application process. Ms. Bainbridge noted that Canada and the Secretariat were working closely to provide the necessary support for delegates and advised to contact the Secretariat as soon as possible in case of challenges. She stressed the importance of delegates including the special event code provided in their visa application form and further informed that for biometrics collection, Canada would look into providing emergency appointments for delegates attending UNEA-6 in Nairobi.

b) Logistical update from the Secretariat on preparations for the fourth session of the committee (INC-4) and the regional consultations

11. The Executive Secretary provided updates on INC-4 preparations. Registrations are open until 26 February and early registrations are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for visa processing, at least 12 weeks prior to travel. To date a total of 1,140 registrations have been approved for INC-4 with 401 delegates from 136 Member States as well as a total of 739 observers, representing 286 NGOs, 5 IGOs and 3 UN organizations. Regarding travel support, the deadline for funding closed on 12 January. The Secretariat emphasized that last-minute changes or cancellations after a ticket has been issued cannot be accommodated.
12. The Executive Secretary further informed that the funds for hosting INC-4 have been provided by Canada, which has allowed the Secretariat to make necessary arrangements with UNON.

13. Based on the guidance received, the Executive Secretary set out a proposal to organize one intersessional webinar on navigating the revised draft text, which could be scheduled for 20 February from 16:00 to 17:30 EAT, and outlined a proposal for the organization of side-events, having in mind the suggestion to scale down the number of these events. Proposed side event themes include: (i) Firstly, enabling safe and sustainable plastic products, chemicals and polymers; (ii) secondly, environmentally sound management of plastics: from design to disposal; (iii) thirdly, facilitating a just transition; and (iv) fourthly, approaches to capacity building, financing and financial mechanisms. The Executive Secretary added that in order to allow enough time for planning, the side events programme would need to be announced by the end of January and co-organizers invited to self-nominate to the Secretariat. The Chair of the INC noted that it is important to use time efficiently at INC-4 and therefore he would not expect specific webinars or side events. The Bureau proposed to discuss this further, with a view to take a decision at its next meeting.
14. The Executive Secretary provided updates on regional meetings, which will be convened with support of the UNEP regional offices. The regional meeting of the Asia Pacific States is scheduled to take place from 5-6 March in Bangkok, the regional meeting of the Latin American and the Caribbean States will be held from 20-22 March in Panama and the regional meeting of the Eastern Europe States is scheduled to take place in Vienna, on 25 March. The Executive Secretary further informed that the Secretariat had received an e-mail on 17 January from the INC focal point from Guinea offering to host the consultations from 3-5 April 2024, but no formal invitation has been received to date. The Secretariat has shared the requirements for hosting the meeting and was now waiting for the guidance of the host country to trigger the internal procedures, including procurement and security assessment by UNDSS. A Host Country Agreement would also need to be signed prior to the regional meeting.
15. The Bureau member representing the group of African States indicated that the regional meeting was to take place from 25-27 March 2024 and not from 3-5 April 2024 in the Republic of Guinea. In wrapping up this agenda item, the Chair thanked the Secretariat for the efforts to date in organizing the regional meetings and called on the Secretariat for continued support for the regional meetings.
16. A Bureau member requested information from the Secretariat on the update of the definition's compilation document. The Executive Secretary clarified that that the Secretariat is working internally on this, however, will wait for the Bureau's guidance on whether to publish it as an INF document for INC-4, and that this could be further discussed at the next meeting.

c) Feedback from Heads of Delegation meeting

17. The Chair reflected on a successful meeting with 100 heads of delegations participating, and thanked for the input, suggestions and comments provided at the meeting. The Chair also thanked a donor country that mentioned the possibility of funding a third delegate.
18. The Chair proposed to schedule further Heads of Delegation meetings in this format up until INC-4, since feedback had been heard from the Bureau that the meetings were received as constructive. Following suggestions from previous Bureau meetings, he proposed the third meeting to include substantive discussions and requested feedback from the Bureau on whether also the second session should cover substantive topics. The Chair also suggested that the format of these meetings could be flexible, perhaps structured with guiding questions, as had

been done for the first Heads of Delegation meeting. The Chair also informed that he is planning a similar exercise with observers, requesting their feedback on a successful running of INC-4. The INC Chair invited feedback from the Bureau on the Heads of Delegation meeting.

19. Support was expressed on the format of the Heads of Delegation meeting. Interventions were deemed engaged and positive, and it was noted that the revised draft text seemed widely accepted as a negotiation starting point at INC-4. The Bureau agreed to further use the format of Heads of Delegations meetings to exchange views. Bureau Members suggested to utilize topics discussed at the Bureau meetings to be further elaborated at future Heads of Delegation meetings.
20. Bureau members stressed the importance of the Chair's reflections and proposals in moving forward at INC-4. In this regard, the Bureau requested proposals from the Chair on the possible way forward on configuration of contact groups and organization of work at INC-4. This was deemed particularly important in terms of having clarified procedural questions prior to INC-4 in order to allow for substantive discussions early on.
21. Ideas were heard from the Bureau on how substantive discussions at future Heads of Delegation meetings could be structured. Requests were made for a summary report of the Heads of Delegation meeting. The Chair explained that the Heads of Delegation meetings he is convening are of informal nature, and thus no summary report is expected.
22. The Bureau discussed how a clear mandate for intersessional work may be achieved at INC-4. The Heads of Delegations meetings were suggested as a potential avenue to address intersessional work early on, which was widely supported.
23. The Chair proposed the scheduling of meetings with stakeholders, which could convene in a similar format to the Heads of Delegation meetings. In this context, the need for early engagement with stakeholders, including the private sector, was noted. The Chair invited and encouraged Bureau members to participate in this meeting.
24. The Chair expressed openness to schedule further Heads of Delegation meetings, further to the two meetings scheduled, if so desired by the Bureau.

d) Chair's tentative thoughts on managing the discussion at INC-4

25. The Chair informed that he is reflecting on the organization of work for INC-4 based on the feedback he has been receiving, including on the possible configuration of contact groups, deliverance of regional and national statements in plenary, as well as possible informal working group configurations to advance the substantive work during INC-4. Bureau Members requested to be informed in advance on proposals on organization of work at INC-4, prior to the next Heads of Delegation meeting. It was agreed by the Bureau that it was important to agree on the structure of contact groups early on.
26. The Chair highlighted the importance of planning intersessional work between sessions four and five with a view to complete the Committee's work at INC-5 in November 2024. The proposal of the establishment of a legal group was heard. The Chair highlighted the importance of utilizing regional consultations and encouraged discussions on core issues. In this regard, exploring all available time and resources for engaged discussion amongst Members was

emphasized. Regarding the timeframe to conclude negotiations, it was highlighted that the mandate given under UNEA 5/14 is to conclude negotiations by the end of 2024, prioritization of work was therefore highlighted.

27. Proposals on different contact group configurations were raised by Members of the Bureau. Some suggested the possibility of informal meetings, e.g. friends of Chair (FoC) meetings. The importance of managing an overburdening of contact group one was raised, as well as how intersessional work was to be discussed at INC-4, as contact group 3 had previously covered intersessional work during INC-3. The Chair emphasized that the negotiations are a member-driven process and that he remains open to hearing views. Regarding Bureau meetings, the Chair proposed the format of biweekly Bureau meetings, alternating between one formal, and one informal meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Next bureau meeting

28. The Chair proposed an informal Bureau meeting in two weeks' time, the Save the Date for which will be shared shortly.

Agenda Item 4: Any other business

29. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 5: Closing of the meeting

30. The meeting closed at 17:00.

Annex I: Action Points

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Issue	Action Point	Responsibility for the action
INC-4 Preparation & Planning	Provide reflections on possible way forward on configuration of contact groups and organization of work at INC-4.	Chair
Heads of Delegation Meeting	Consider scheduling of future Heads of Delegation meetings and propose dates.	Chair with information from INC Secretariat
Further consider update of definitions document ahead of INC-4	Provide guidance on possibility/modality of update of definitions document ahead of INC-4.	Bureau Members