

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

Bureau meeting

Saturday, 24 February 2024

14:00- 17:00 (GMT+3)

Hybrid 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: Ms. Juliet Kabera (Rwanda); Mr. Cheikh Ndiaye Sylla (Senegal);
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan);
Eastern European States: Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia); Mr. Harry Liv (Estonia), attending online;
Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru);
Small-Island Developing States: Ms. Asha Challenger (Antigua and Barbuda), attending online;
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 agenda Item 2a were Ms. Cynthia Bainbridge, and Ms. Erin Silsbe, representatives of INC-4 Host Country, Canada.
5. In his opening remarks, the INC Chair, Amb. Vayas Valdivieso, noted the importance of organizing an efficient and inclusive INC-4. The INC Chair provided an overview of the agenda and informed that the Bureau was joined by representatives of INC-4 Host Country for agenda item 2a, to provide an update on INC-4 venue and logistics. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to provide opening remarks.
6. The Executive Secretary, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, welcomed the INC Bureau to Nairobi, and informed on events scheduled during UNEA-6 pertaining to plastic pollution as well as on the

Report of the Executive Director on Progress in the implementation of resolution 5/14 under UNEA-6 agenda item 5 ([UNEP/EA.6/11](#)).

7. The agenda was adopted without further additions.

Agenda Item 2: Planning of the fourth session of the Committee.

a) Update on venue and logistics by the Host Country.

8. Representatives from the INC-4 Host Country Canada updated the Bureau on the preparations for INC-4. Noting the importance of having an inclusive session, the representatives informed that Canada, in collaboration with WWF International, will be hosting a high-level multi-stakeholders' day on 22 April 2024. The INC Host Country representatives further informed that Canada will host a 'Plastics Action Zone' from 23-29 April at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, for accredited and non-accredited partners and stakeholders to facilitate awareness raising and information exchange.
9. The Bureau welcomed the updates and stressed the importance of the planned initiatives by Canada to provide positive inspiration for the negotiations and a voice to all stakeholders. Clarification on whether ministerial attendance was anticipated was sought by the Bureau. The Host Country representatives informed that the high-level multi-stakeholders' day on 22 April was an open day and welcomed participation at the highest level.
10. One member of the Bureau requested updates on the facilitation of the visa process for INC-4, noting that good progress had been made but some applicants were still awaiting their visa approval. The Host Country representatives stressed that Canada and the Secretariat were working closely to provide the necessary support for delegates and advised to contact the Secretariat in case of challenges. The Executive Secretary requested delegates to provide their visa application number via the portal created in order to facilitate the exchange of information with the competent authorities from the Host Country and to consult the updated [Visa Application Guide](#). The Bureau was informed that biometrics collection has been facilitated during the week of UNEA-6, and will be facilitated during the regional consultations, namely in Bangkok and Panama.

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

11. The Executive Secretary was invited to provide an update on the preparations for the fourth session of the INC. She informed that as of Friday 23 February, 2,598 registrations had been approved. This included 669 delegates from 148 Member States and 1,929 observers. The Executive Secretary reminded Bureau Members that registration for INC-4 closes on Monday, 26 February, and requested relaying of this information to the Bureau members' respective regions.
12. Regarding the preparation of official documents, the Executive Secretary updated the Bureau that the advance English version of the revised draft text is online, as well as the provisional agenda for INC-4 and the draft rules of procedure. The official documents are expected to be available in all UN official languages six weeks ahead of the session, as per the applicable draft

rules of procedure provisionally applied to the INC. The Bureau was informed that the INC-3 meeting report is also available on the INC-3 webpage in English as an advance version.

13. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the Secretariat had received a host country agreement from Guinea on 9 February with information regarding hosting arrangements for the regional consultations of the Group of African States prior to INC-4. After receipt of this document, the Secretariat started working on the necessary procedures to finalize the agreement, including the required clearance process with the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Based on the advice from UNDSS, given the most recent developments in Guinea, the Secretariat would not be able to support consultations in Conakry at this moment in time. The Executive Secretary highlighted that the Secretariat is available to continue discussions with a view of hosting meetings in Guinea in the future.
14. Upon consultation with the Group of African States, the Secretariat has been informed that the African Group had decided to hold their regional consultations in Ottawa prior to INC-4, from 18 to 20 April. The difficulty in finalization of these arrangements was noted by a Bureau member, requesting the Secretariat to provide travel arrangements to allow for delegates to register for accommodation. The Executive Secretary responded that notice will be given in the next two weeks. The dates and locations for the meetings of the other regions remains unchanged, as reported during the last Bureau meeting.
15. In terms of preparations for INC-4, the Executive Secretary provided updates on the new document submission platform, which will be made available for INC-4 to allow participants to share in-session written submissions and statements. The Executive Secretary confirmed that it is a pre-existing and tested system, currently being used by UNEP for UNEA-6, and will be tailored to the needs of the INC. The website will continue to publish submitted documents on the INC website as per previous sessions. A timely notification will be sent to participants about the new platform, including user instructions and guidelines.
16. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that two training sessions on the new Document Submission Platform will be scheduled in early April, as well as one on-site training on Sunday 21 April. Participants will be invited to nominate one focal point only to be onboarded to use the platform in submitting all documents on behalf of their delegation or organization. During the transition to the platform and while in-session, the Secretariat will ensure an open channel of communication on technical support via e-mail. Manual submissions will be possible for participants who experience technical difficulties. The update on the new submission platform was welcomed by the Bureau.

c) Planning for Heads of Delegation meetings.

17. The INC Chair presented his tentative thoughts on the scheduling of future Heads of Delegation informal online meetings. The Chair indicated that his objective is to bring members together to reach their goal, which is to agree on a text of an instrument at INC-5 that supports members in achieving their collective goal to end plastic pollution and that members can implement effectively. The Chair indicated that there is limited time to complete our work and that we need to use it most efficiently and effectively, which can and must go hand in hand with a transparent and inclusive negotiation.

18. The INC Chair informed the Bureau that the next Heads of Delegation meeting is scheduled to be held on the 11 and 12 March in two time zones to facilitate broad participation. Furthermore, the INC Chair informed the potential option of scheduling two additional Heads of Delegation meetings prior to INC-4, one at the beginning of April, and one in-person.
19. The INC Chair invited the Bureau's inputs and suggestions on the Heads of Delegation meetings, in particular on the possible topics to be discussed during the second Heads of Delegation meeting. The INC Chair proposed options for possible topics to be considered at the next Heads of Delegation meetings, both on process and substantive matters.
20. The Bureau congratulated the INC Chair once again for the successful hosting of the first Heads of Delegation meeting. The Bureau held discussions on potential topics for the next Heads of Delegation meeting, recommending the prioritization of discussions on process and organization of work at these informal meetings. Time permitting, identifying topics for negotiations on substance was deemed possible for future Heads of Delegation meetings.

d) Chair's initial thoughts on the organization of work at INC-4.

21. The INC Chair presented his thoughts on the organization of work at INC-4. The proposal reflected a need to ensure that there was no over-burdening for the two contact groups, while at the same time ensuring we allocate time for all topics, and the amount of meetings stayed manageable, in particular for delegations with small capacity.
22. The Bureau reflected on the INC Chair's proposal and on several possible modalities for the organization of work, based on the different experiences across multiple processes and on preliminary views from the various regions.
23. The Chair offered to outline an informal proposal in writing to share with the Bureau on 28 February for consultations with the regions. This would also facilitate discussions at the upcoming informal Heads of Delegation meeting.
24. With regard to the Chair's Scenario Note/Reflections Note, the INC Chair shared his intention of releasing the Note in a timely manner, after sharing his thoughts with the Bureau. The Note would initially be released in English and would be translated into the other five UN languages at a later stage. The Heads of Delegation meetings were identified as an avenue to further reflect on the proposals for the organization of work.
25. The Bureau inquired whether INC-4 was intended to be held in a hybrid format. The Chair clarified that INC-4 will be an in-person meeting with live web-streaming of the plenary sessions.

e) Side events.

26. The INC Chair invited the Executive Secretary to provide updates on the organization of official side-events at INC-4.
27. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that a notification with a call for expression of interest to organize side-events was sent out on 19 February, with a deadline of 1 March. Three official thematic side events will be held in-person at INC-4 on Wednesday 24 April and Thursday 25 April from 13:30-14:45 at the venue. The proposed themes are: plastic pollution

in the marine environment, as well as approaches to capacity building, financing and financial mechanisms and enabling a just transition. So far, 51 expressions of interest had been received.

28. The Bureau inquired about the webinars scheduled. The Executive Secretary informed that a webinar on navigating the revised zero draft was planned to be held in early March. One webinar could be also be held on the organization of work with the INC Chair.
29. The INC Chair informed the Bureau that he is planning a dialogue with observers, following a similar format to the Heads of Delegation meetings.

Agenda Item 3: Any other matters

30. At the request from one Bureau member, the Executive Secretary informed that 3 formal offers to host the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries had been received, including a joint offer by two Member States. Since a decision may be taken at INC-4, as noted by the Committee at its third session, the Executive Secretary informed that the Secretariat will be reaching out to the countries from which offers have been received, to provide information on the process and requirements to host such a meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Next bureau meeting

31. The INC Chair provided information on upcoming Bureau meetings, which are tentatively scheduled for Thursday 21 March from 15:00 to 17:00 East Africa time, as well as in-person on Saturday 20 April from 09:00 to 11:00 Eastern Standard Time.
32. A Bureau member noted that a longer timeslot may need to be blocked for the Bureau meeting scheduled in April.
33. The INC Chair highlighted that further meetings with the Bureau may be scheduled if a need for this was identified.

Agenda Item 5: Closing of the meeting

34. The meeting closed at 18:00.

Annex I: Action Points.

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Issue	Action Point	Responsibility for the action
INC-4 Preparation and Planning	Provide reflections on possible organization of work at INC-4 in writing to the Bureau on 28 February.	INC Chair
	Send notification on training sessions on the new in-session document submission platform for INC-4. Delegations will be prompted to nominate one focal point for the platform and to participate in the training.	Secretariat
Heads of Delegation Meeting	Share with Bureau proposed guiding questions on second Heads of Delegation meeting.	INC Chair