

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

Bureau meeting

Thursday, 21 March 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: Ms. Juliet Kabera (Rwanda); Mr. Cheikh Ndiaye Sylla (Senegal);
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan);
Eastern European States: Mr. Harry Liv (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 agenda Item 2a was Ms. Cynthia Bainbridge, representative of INC-4 Host Country, Canada.
5. In attendance for agenda item 3 were Ms. Chung Kyung-Hwa and Mr. Park Minsoo, representatives of INC-5 Host Country, Republic of Korea.

6. In his opening remarks, the INC Chair, Amb. Vayas Valdivieso, thanked the Bureau and Secretariat for their active engagement and support to the process and informed that the Chair and Executive Secretary, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, were currently attending the Latin American and Caribbean group regional consultations in Panama. He highlighted his intention of developing the agenda together with the Bureau and invited the Executive Secretary to provide opening remarks.
7. The Executive Secretary welcomed the Bureau, indicating that INC-4 is now only a month away. The Executive Secretary noted that preparations for INC-4 are progressing well and that an update will be provided under the relevant agenda item. A few busy weeks ahead with the third HODs, informal stakeholder webinar, as well as the webinar on the Revised Draft text, were mentioned. The Executive Secretary thanked the Chair and noted that she looked forward to receiving guidance from the Bureau.
8. The agenda was adopted without further additions.

Agenda Item 2: Planning of the fourth session of the Committee (INC-4).

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

9. Representatives from the INC-4 Host Country Canada updated the Bureau on the preparations for INC-4. The Bureau received updates on events planned in collaboration with WWF. On the 21 April, Canada is planning a Host Country Alliance meeting and on April 22 a high-level multi-stakeholders' day. A 'Plastics Action Zone' (PAZ) will be held from 23-29 April at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, for accredited and non-accredited partners and stakeholders to convene and host events. The PAZ has received more than 100 applications, in total 35 events will be held. The PAZ website, which will include scheduling, will be available soon. The Chair thanked INC-4 Host country representatives for their updates.
10. A Bureau member mentioned that certain observers had been experiencing difficulties in obtaining their visas and highlighted that their attendance at INC-4 is vital and must be ensured. INC-4 Host country representatives ensured the Bureau that also observers may contact the Secretariat via the Portal if they are experiencing difficulties with their applications. It was noted that it may be helpful to have supporting documentation such as documents indicating attendance at previous INC sessions, such as previous badges, readily available for upload on the relevant portal.

b) Logistical update from the Secretariat on preparations for INC-4.

11. The Executive Secretary provided updates on the preparations for INC-4. It was noted that registration for INC-4 is now closed. In total, 3889 registrations have been approved. This includes 1094 delegates from 170 Member States, and 2795 observers. From the observer organizations, 2588 participants are registered under the 736 NGOs already approved. In addition, 40 participants representing 14 IGO, and 167 approved

participants representing 17 UN organizations are currently registered. The Secretariat will also provide travel support to over 280 delegates from eligible countries, which includes 20 observers from NGOs that have been selected for travel support.

12. In follow up to the update provided by INC-4 Host Country Canada, the Executive Secretary requested the Bureau to remind delegates from their regions to share their visa application number with the Secretariat via the portal, if applicable.
13. Regarding official documents, the Executive Secretary provided updates on documentation. The provisional and annotated agenda, as well as draft rules of procedure are available online in all the official languages. The revised draft text has been available online in English since 28 December and is expected to be published in all UN languages this week. The Executive Secretary concluded that the Secretariat is also finalizing the INF documents on plastic science and overview of funding arrangements and will make these available two weeks before the session as UNEP/PP/INC.4/INF/1 and UNEP/PP/INC.4/INF/2.
14. With regards to in-session document submissions, the Executive Secretary updated the Bureau that the document submission platform will be finalised and ready for user registration shortly. Information including user instructions and guidance will follow at the end of March.
15. Updates on regional consultations were provided by the Executive Secretary. The regional consultation of the Asia-Pacific States were successfully held in Bangkok from 5 - 6 March. As indicated by the group of African States, the regional consultations of the African Group will now take place in Ottawa, from 18 – 20 March. The regional office for Africa is currently in the process of procuring a venue. The Latin America and Caribbean States' regional consultations are ongoing from 20-22 March in Panama City, and on the 25 March the Eastern European regional consultations will be held in Vienna.
16. Regarding travel support for African Group regional consultations, the Executive Secretary clarified that, should the nominated delegate be the same one nominated to receive travel support for the INC-4 session, the DSA will cover the entire period of both regional and INC-4 meetings. DSA support is provided for one delegate per country. The flight travel dates would also be adjusted accordingly. If the delegate is nominated for travel support for the regional consultations only, then the DSA will only cover the period of the regional meeting. Additionally, at the request of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), through their Bureau member, the Secretariat will be adjusting the flight tickets for sponsored delegates from these countries, as needed, to allow for their participation in the SIDS meeting scheduled from 17-19 April in Ottawa. DSA will be covered directly by the SIDS, as these delegates have also joined the regional consultations of their respective UN regions.

c) Heads of Delegation Meetings.

17. The INC Chair provided a summary of the second Heads of Delegation meeting (HODs meeting), which took place on 11 and 12 March. The meeting had been well-attended, with a total of 117 participants from 73 Members across the two sessions. The INC Chair outlined that at the second HODs meeting, the proposed organization of work at

INC-4 had been outlined, building on what had been presented at the last Bureau meeting. Both HODs and Bureau meeting inputs had been helpful in further developing the way forward for an efficient and productive session at INC-4.

18. The Chair stressed the importance of agreeing on the instrument text at INC-5, which Members can effectively implement and that supports Members in achieving their collective goal to end plastic pollution. The Chair summarized that support had been heard for the establishment of two contact groups, and for an organization of work within the contact groups that allowed for in-depth discussions and the opportunity to streamline the draft text. A range of views were expressed to ensure efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness and the right level of flexibility to advance in streamlining the draft text. Calls were also heard to start preparing a draft decision on intersessional work between the fourth and fifth sessions of the committee, on specific issues that are essential to inform key aspects of the negotiations and to enable the Committee to conclude its work.
19. There had also been indication of broad support for the establishment of a legal drafting group, with a clear mandate and composition. Different views on process and substance had been heard, which were deemed important in building and finalizing the Scenario Note, for which the Chair indicated he would share elements during the relevant agenda item.
20. The Chair proposed the possibility of a third online informal HODs meeting on 8 and 9 April, as well as the possibility of a fourth informal HODs meeting on 21 April in Ottawa, for which he welcomed views from the Bureau.
21. The Bureau provided suggestions about modality and topics of a next HODs meeting. Members of the Bureau emphasized that it is important for Bureau members to have information ahead of the HODs in writing, in order to effectively prepare for the discussions, such as guiding questions. Bureau members expressed their openness to a third and possibly a fourth HODs meeting, making sure that the fourth meeting does not interfere with any INC-4 preparatory meetings or regional consultations.
22. In terms of topics, the Chair emphasized the importance of an exchange of views at future HODs meetings, proposing that discussions on substance may be possible at future meetings. The Bureau highlighted that the informal HODs meetings could also present a good opportunity to ensure that all members are comfortable with the proposed organization of work in order to enable a smooth start to INC-4 and enable substantive negotiations from the beginning. The Chair agreed that a clear agenda for the HODs will be important.
23. Members of the Bureau requested to receive an advance copy of the Scenario Note ahead of its publication, in order to provide regional input. The Chair proposed to share the draft Scenario Note with members of the Bureau after completion of the meeting. An informal Bureau meeting scheduled for the following Thursday, 28 March, was proposed for members of the Bureau to share input with the Chair, which the Chair requested, if possible, to be shared in writing by Wednesday, 27 March.

24. The Chair thanked the Bureau for their cooperation, thanked the regions and their engagement, emphasized the good work done in the regional consultations, which he had attended in person.

d) Organization of work at INC-4.

25. The Chair presented his proposal for the organization of work at INC-4. This included the establishment of two contact groups, proposed to be chaired by the previous INC-3 co-facilitators. Contact group one would be mandated to address parts I and II of the revised draft text and contact group two would be mandated to consider parts III, IV, V and VI. Each contact group would be invited to divide its work into sub-groups, which would be chaired by two dedicated co-facilitators each. Contact group one could have three sub-groups, while contact group two could have two sub-groups. Any outcomes of work of sub-groups would need to be reported to the respective contact groups.
26. Regarding the number of contact group meetings running in parallel, the Chair outlined that two meetings would be held in parallel. In accordance with the Chair's proposal, flexibility may be requested regarding a potential third meeting to be held in parallel at INC-4, should there be a need. In this modality, a maximum of three meetings would be held in parallel. The Chair invited the Bureau to share their views on this proposal.
27. Members of the Bureau expressed openness to reflect and consult with their regions. Some heard openness to more than two contact group meetings running in parallel in their region, while others heard support for two meetings only. The Bureau sought clarification on the mandates for the sub-groups. The Chair clarified that the mandate would be formal, coming directly from the plenary. The Bureau expressed preference for a clear mandate for the sub-groups to enable a clear approach and avoid negotiation time to be used to discuss process. The Bureau explored possible modalities to outline a clear mandate and topics of discussion for the sub-groups at INC-4.
28. The Bureau indicated they will try to ensure feedback by their regions by next week in time for the proposed informal Bureau meeting. The Bureau applauded the Chair's work in consulting with regions and his guidance and leadership in the process, and requested more detail in the organization of work and emphasized their support to his way forward.
29. The Chair informed the Bureau that he would circulate the draft Scenario Note with the Bureau after the meeting.

Agenda Item 3. Logistical updates on the fifth session of the Committee (INC-5).

30. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that members of the INC Secretariat and UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) had visited the INC-5 venue in Busan for the first site visit. The fifth session will be taking place at the Busan Exhibition and Convention Centre from 25 November to 1 December 2024, as decided by the Committee, and will be preceded by regional consultations on 24 November.

31. The Executive Secretary highlighted that the initial logistical and security preparations have been completed and that the Secretariat is now in contact with colleagues from the Republic of Korea and the Busan Metropolitan Government. As per the previous sessions, the Secretariat and UNDSS are in regular contact with the host country to ensure that all preparations run smoothly. Launching of registration and information on the session is expected soon after INC-4.
32. Representatives from the INC-5 Host Country Korea updated the Bureau on the preparations for INC-5 and thanked the Executive Secretary for her summary of the site visit. The venue is secured, and audiovisual and room arrangements are currently being developed.
33. INC-5 Host Country Representatives informed the Bureau that consultations are currently ongoing with relevant ministries and authorities to work on logistical details, such as visas and accommodation arrangements. All necessary items will be reflected in the Information Note, which is anticipated to be circulated in May.
34. The INC Chair thanked the INC-5 Host Country Representatives, sharing his appreciation for the great efforts and arrangements made. The INC Chair opened the floor to questions and discussions amongst the Bureau.
35. A Bureau member raised the question whether preparations are being made for ministerial attendance at INC-5, as this may be expected at the last INC session. The Host Country representatives responded that the Republic of Korea and Secretariat are preparing to cover any eventuality.
36. Regarding interpretation, all plenary sessions would be served with full interpretation, while the contact group meetings would be held in English only, as per the standard practice. The critical importance of securing interpretation for the final plenary adopting the instrument was highlighted by the Bureau, which was confirmed by INC-5 Host Country Representatives and the Secretariat.
37. The question of accommodation and visas was raised by a Bureau Member, as many countries from their region did not have access to diplomatic facilities in their country. INC-5 Host Country Representatives clarified that, regarding both queries, more information will be detailed in the Information Note.
38. The Bureau inquired about the possibility of stakeholder events. The INC Chair and Bureau thanked the Republic of Korea once again for their attendance and important updates.

Agenda Item 4. Any other matters.

39. A Bureau member sought clarification from the Secretariat on travel arrangements for African delegates wishing to travel to Canada earlier in order to join the African Group regional consultation meeting from 18-20 April. The Secretariat clarified that funded participants may request for tickets to be extended, however, only one representative will be receiving DSA for the regional consultation day. This may be facilitated through the regional office.

40. The decision on where the Diplomatic Conference would take place was raised by a Bureau member. The Chair indicated that this is captured in the Scenario Note.
41. The Chair thanked the Bureau once again for their engagement and indicated he would share the draft Scenario Note with the Bureau after the meeting as well as an action plan with key dates and deliverables.

Agenda Item 5. Next bureau meeting.

42. The INC Chair invited the Bureau to attend an informal virtual Bureau meeting next week Thursday, 28 March. An invitation was to be circulated shortly.
43. The Chair indicated that the next formal Bureau meeting will take place in-person on Saturday 20 April from 10:00 until 13:00 Eastern Standard Time at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa. The meeting will be followed by a lunch.

Agenda Item 6. Closing of the meeting.

44. The meeting closed at 18:00.

Annex I: Action Points

Issue	Action Point	Responsibility for the action
Chair's Scenario Note	Circulate the draft to Bureau. Include proposal for subgroups. (21 March)	INC Chair
	Comments on the draft in writing before the informal Bureau meeting on 28 March. (27 March)	Bureau
	Finalize Scenario Note for editing and translation. (To be posted week of April 1)	INC Chair and Secretariat
Heads of Delegation Meeting	<p>Dates for next Heads of Delegation Meetings:</p> <p><u>Third HODs (online):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 April from 11.00 pm – 12.30 am East African Time (GMT+3) • 9 April from 11.00 am – 12.30 pm East African Time (GMT+3) <p>Key focus: Intersessional Work. Notification to be sent 25 March.</p> <p><u>Fourth HODs (in person in Ottawa):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 April from 8.00 – 09.30 am (TBC). 	INC Chair and Secretariat

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	Notification to be sent by 8 April.	
INC-4 Preparation and Planning	<p>Observers informal webinar prior to INC-4 (notification to be circulated 22 March)</p> <p>Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 March from 20:00 – 22.00 East African Time (GMT+3) • 28 March from 11:00 – 13:00 East African Time (GMT+3) 	INC Chair and Secretariat
	<p>INC-4 webinar</p> <p>This webinar will provide an outline of the logistics and planning for INC-4, including from the Chair, the secretariat and the host country. A brief introduction to the revised draft text will also be provided by the secretariat. The session will be recorded and posted on the INC website.</p>	INC Chair and Secretariat