

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

Bureau meeting

Wednesday, 29 May 2024

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

Online

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. Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal); Ms. Juliet Kabera (Rwanda);
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan); Mr. Mohammad Al-Khashashneh (Jordan);
Eastern European States: Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia); Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia);
Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velasquez (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 the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Ms. Brenda Koekkoek, Senior Programme Management Officer and Ms. Marianna Bolshakova, INC Legal Officer.
4. In attendance for agenda Item 4a were representatives of INC-5 Host Country, Republic of Korea, Ms. Chung Kyung-Hwa, and Mr. Park Minsoo.
5. In his opening remarks, the INC Chair, Amb. Vayas Valdivieso, welcomed members of the Bureau, recapping the outcomes of INC-4. He highlighted the importance of utilizing the intersessional period before INC-5 effectively given the time remaining to

reach an agreement by the end of 2024. In this regard, the Chair mentioned the possibility of scheduling more Heads of Delegation meetings, one of which may be convened in person. He indicated his availability to attend meetings convened by the regional groups, if this was requested by the regions. The Chair highlighted the advancements at INC-4 and looked forward to the region's reflections on the organization of work for INC-5. He invited Bureau members to flag any additional multilateral meetings which might benefit from INC Chair or Secretarial attendance. The shared goal of an effective INC-5 was highlighted.

6. The Executive Secretary, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, provided opening remarks, welcoming the Bureau to its first meeting after INC-4. She informed that the Secretariat was working on preparations for the INC Bureau retreat, intersessional work, and INC-5. She recapped the attendance numbers [at INC-4](#), with over 2,500 delegates, representing 170 Members, including the European Union, and over 490 Observer organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, UN system entities and non-governmental organizations and 59 media outlets. The Executive Secretary recalled the Committee's request to issue a compilation of the draft text, maintaining corresponding placeholders for potential annexes as contained in the Revised Draft Text (document UNEP/PP/INC.4/3), as an official document for INC-5. The document was being prepared by the Secretariat, an advance copy of which will be posted in English by late June.
7. The meeting agenda was adopted without further additions.

Agenda Item 2: Outcomes of INC-4 and proposed next steps.

8. The INC Chair invited the Executive Secretary to update the Bureau on the results of the [INC-4 survey](#). The Executive Secretary noted that the majority of respondents considered INC-4 successful, particularly in terms of agreeing on the mandate for establishing two ad-hoc intersessional open-ended expert groups. Some respondents expressed their wish that the process had moved further substantively. Others highlighted difficulties with the visa process for Canada. The badge collection process was considered easy and clear, with adequate support available on registration issues and the pre-session documents were considered very useful to prepare for the session. The evaluation of facilities and accessibility of areas provided was positive.
9. Regarding the organization of work in the INC-4 survey, several respondents considered that the meetings of the contact groups and subgroups supported the discussions. Two main challenges were pointed out by respondents: one related to logistical and technical aspects of the rooms, including Wi-Fi, sound, microphones and seating; another related to the organization of the meetings in terms of time, with many noting the need for better time management and clearer information. Some indicated that since no more than three meetings were running in parallel, the division into contact

groups and subgroups led to time inefficiencies, with some mentioning that the contact groups were less useful after the establishment of the subgroups.

10. The Secretariat was invited to provide updates on intersessional work. As an outcome of INC-4, two intersessional workstreams had been established, on financial mechanisms and technical aspects of the instrument, with a mandate as decided in plenary. Since INC-4, the Chair and Secretariat have been meeting weekly with the designated co-chairs of the groups, to work on planning. An invitation to [members to nominate experts](#) to the groups will be issued by 30 May with a deadline of 24 June. A dedicated [webpage](#) has been set up for the intersessional work and, as requested by the Committee, the expert groups are to commence their work using electronic means. Up to three virtual meetings are expected and the work will be conducted in English only.
11. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed that in-person meetings of the expert groups are scheduled to take place from 24 – 28 August in Bangkok. For members eligible for travel support, the Secretariat will provide funding to one nominated expert per group. To ensure equal opportunity and balanced representation among members and due to space limitations at the venue, members are encouraged to consider the number of experts designated. Should the number of nominated experts exceed the existing capacity of the venue, floating badges will need to be issued to access the meeting rooms. Nominated experts are strongly encouraged to participate throughout the entire process of the groups. Further logistical details will be communicated through the nomination process.
12. The Bureau sought clarification on the formal outcome document of the ad hoc intersessional open-ended expert groups meetings. The Secretariat indicated that the outcomes will be presented in the form of Co-chairs' reports for consideration by the Committee, including its analysis at INC-5. The Secretariat also clarified that no in-person regional consultations are planned during the intersessional period, due to time and resource constraints.
13. Regarding the Legal Drafting Group, the Secretariat recalled that the group was to commence its work at INC-5, as had been decided by the Committee at INC-4. The Secretariat informed that it will circulate an invitation for Members [who wished to do so, to communicate information on their legal expert](#) to the Secretariat by 15 August 2024. The names of the legal experts will be made available on the INC-5 webpage, under the dedicated page in the INC-5 session tab. The Co-chairs of the group would be appointed at INC-5. The Secretariat clarified that no additional funding, beyond the regular funding for two delegates from eligible countries, was available for the legal experts from Member delegations.

Agenda Item 3: Planning of the Bureau retreat, 16-17 June in Geneva.

14. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the status of preparations for the Bureau retreat.
15. A Bureau member raised concerns about the date of the retreat, as it coincided with a religious holiday. In order to ensure attendance of all regions, the possibility of a hybrid retreat, or, alternatively, a possible rescheduling was discussed. The Bureau tentatively agreed with the proposal to convene the retreat in hybrid format.

Agenda Item 4: Planning for INC-5.

a. Update by the host country.

16. INC-5 Host Country Representatives, Ms. Chung Kyung-Hwa and Mr. Park Minsoo, provided an update on the preparations for INC-5, including logistical arrangements for the session.
17. Pointing out the importance of high-level engagement at this stage of the process, several Bureau members inquired whether the Republic of Korea was intending to host a high-level event. The INC-5 Host Country indicated that this was being looked into in consultation with the INC Secretariat and was still to be determined. The Bureau also inquired about a possible event on the margins of the UN General Assembly.
18. Regarding the logistical preparations for INC-5, the Bureau highlighted the importance of addressing the lessons learned from previous sessions and underlined the need to have all elements in place for this critical INC session. Several members stressed that since this is the final INC session, all logistics must be conducive to an effective INC-5, including the availability of sufficient rooms throughout the duration of the session, as well as appropriate AV, internet and interpretation. Several Bureau members stressed the importance of the Host Country ensuring enough flexibility for adjustments on the ground as the negotiations develop.
19. Concerns were raised regarding the limited availability of hotels close to the venue, with most located more than 30 minutes away. The importance of the facilitation of visas for delegates was also stressed.
20. The Host Country representatives indicated that they were making thorough preparations to ensure a successful meeting and would seek to respond to the needs to the best of their ability, contingent on their available budget. Regarding accommodation, the Host Country representatives informed delegates that their conference organizer had blocked a number of hotels in the vicinity and the reservations would be made through the organizer. Regarding the visas for delegations, the Host Country representatives explained that the Host Country is in close consultation with

INC Secretariat to facilitate visa issuance. The information on hotels, transportation, and visas will be made available in the Information Note.

b. Logistical update from the Secretariat on preparations for INC-5.

21. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the Secretariat would dispatch the invitation for INC-5 in the upcoming weeks, to allow delegates to begin their preparations, including for visas and travel arrangements, once the core parameters had been agreed with the Host Country. Initial discussions on the Host Country Agreement have also begun; however, work on the text and core requirements of the Agreement have not been carried out, as the Host Country was conducting internal consultations. The Secretariat was working with the Republic of Korea to finalize the floor plans, including to address some of the lessons learned at INC-4. Regular meetings with the Republic of Korea have started and will continue in order to ensure all preparations are in place for INC-5.

Agenda Item 5: Any other matters.

22. A Bureau member raised the question of whether regional consultations would commence prior to the ad-hoc intersessional open-ended expert groups meeting in Bangkok. The Secretariat clarified that this was not currently planned.

Agenda Item 6: Next Bureau meeting.

23. The next Bureau meetings were announced to be held on: 15 July, 12 August, 30 September, and 28 October, for which invites would be shared shortly.
24. The meeting closed at 17:30pm.