

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

Bureau meeting

Saturday, 20 April 2024 / 10:00- 13:00 (EST)

April 23-29 / 8:15/8:30 – 9:00 (daily)

Shaw Centre Ottawa

Summary of the Bureau Meetings at INC-4

Meeting of the Bureau on 20 April 2024

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)¹;
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan);
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 Bureau was joined by Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ms. Inger Andersen, for the first hour of the meeting.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.

¹ Joining from 21 April onwards.

5. In attendance for agenda Item 2a were representatives of INC-4 Host Country, Canada, Ms. Erin Silsbe and Ms. Cynthia Bainbridge.
6. In his opening remarks, the INC Chair, Amb. Vayas Valdivieso, welcomed members of the Bureau, the Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Matur-Filipp, as well as the INC-4 Host Country representatives. The INC Chair expressed his welcome and gratitude, as well as confidence for a positive outcome at INC-4. He underlined the global importance of the process, of having an inclusive, transparent and effective negotiation and of maintaining clear communication with all regions. He reiterated the importance of the shared goal of ending plastic pollution and he looked forward to the session ahead.
7. The Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen thanked the Chair and welcomed the Bureau. The importance of an effective organization of work was highlighted, as well as the importance of advancing at this pivotal session. The INC process, in accordance with the mandate provided by UNEA Resolution 5/14, serves to end plastic pollution and to conclude an international legally binding instrument by the end of 2024, a timeframe which should be kept. The Executive Director highlighted the importance of the process and thanked the INC Chair and Host Country representatives of INC-4 for their continuous efforts.
8. The Executive Secretary, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, expressed gratitude to the INC Chair for his leadership as well as to the Bureau for their guidance and INC-4 Host Country Canada for their tireless support. An update was provided to the Bureau on the attendance of the observer webinar, third Heads of Delegation meeting, as well as the webinar on logistics and planning by the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary expressed that she was looking forward to a successful fourth session ahead.
9. The meeting agenda was adopted without further additions.

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

a) Update by the host country.

10. The INC-4 Host Country Representatives Canada welcomed the Bureau to Ottawa. They highlighted that a formal agenda for the 'Partnerships Day' has been circulated through the INC secretariat. Attendance was open to all accredited participants for INC-4. The Shaw Centre was currently being set up for the session and preparations for the Ministerial Day and regional meetings were ongoing, in order to make the logistics as seamless as possible. The Plastic Action Zone 'PAZ' at the National Arts Centre was open from the 23 – 29 April with side events happening three times a day, open without prior registration or accreditation. The INC-4 Host Country Representatives of Canada

once again welcomed the Bureau to Ottawa and expressed they were looking forward to the session ahead.

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

11. The Executive Secretary provided an update on registrations, which totalled 4,145 registrations approved. This included 1,292 delegates from 175 Member States, and 2,853 observers. From the observer organizations, 2,608 participants are registered under the 742 NGOs already approved. In addition, 48 participants representing 16 IGOs, and 197 approved participants representing 22 UN organizations are currently registered.
12. Three official thematic side events were to be held in-person at INC-4 on Wednesday 24 April and on Thursday 25 April from 13:30 to 14:45 at the Shaw Centre. The themes included: plastic pollution in the marine environment; approaches to capacity building, financing and financial mechanisms; and enabling a just transition.
13. With regards to documentation, the Chair's Scenario Note had been made available online in all UN languages. With this, all the official documents for the session were complete and uploaded on the INC-4 website. The two updated INF documents on plastic science and overview of funding currently available to address plastic pollution, are also available online as UNEP/PP/INC.4/INF/1 and UNEP/PP/INC.4/INF/2.
14. An update was provided on regional consultations. The African Group regional consultations had been ongoing in Ottawa this past week. The SIDS have also held their own consultations back-to-back with INC-4. Regional consultations for all regions were also scheduled for 21 April. Furthermore, there was opportunity for regional meetings to be held every morning throughout the week.
15. Regarding the in-session Documents Platform, an in-person information session for delegates who registered to use the platform was to be held on Sunday 21 April, from 11:00 – 12:00pm at the Shaw Centre.

c) Organization of work and contact group planning at INC-4.

16. The INC Chair presented his proposal of contact groups and sub-groups, and announced the names of the proposed co-chairs and co-facilitators. The proposed contact group co-chairs were announced as Gwendalyn Kingtaro Sisior (Palau) and Axel Borchmann (Germany) for contact group one, as well as Oliver Boachie (Ghana) and Kate Lynch (Australia) for contact group two. The proposed co-facilitators for the sub-groups were announced to the Bureau as: Sara Elkhoully (Egypt) and Julius Piercy (UK) for sub-group 1.1; Maria Angélica Ikeda (Brazil) and Erlend Draget (Norway) for sub-group

1.2; Andrés Duque Solís (Colombia) and Abdulrahman bin Ali Alshehri (Saudi Arabia) for sub-group 1.3; Naomi Namara Karekaho (Uganda) and Antonio Miguel Luís (Portugal) for sub-group 2.1; and Danny Rahdiansyah (Indonesia) and Marine Collignon (France) for sub-group 2.2.

17. Regarding the organization of work at INC-4, the INC Chair emphasized the need to have a clear mandate for the contact groups and sub-groups, providing flexibility to the co-facilitators to enable the start of textual negotiations as early as possible. The need to have no more than two meetings in parallel during textual negotiations had been heard along with transparent, inclusive and efficient negotiations.

d) Feedback from third Heads of Delegation meeting, including intersessional work.

18. The Chair welcomed comments on the third Heads of Delegation meeting, highlighting that it had been important to hear comments on the Chair's Scenario Note and expressing gratitude to hear from different delegations in an exchange of views, suggestions, comments, as well as questions on the Scenario Note. The three informal Heads of Delegation meetings discussed, respectively, process and facilitating agreement on the instrument, organisation of work and key elements of the instrument, possible modalities and content for intersessional work between the fourth and fifth sessions of the committee. The meetings provided space for meaningful informal discussions towards INC-4. The Chair opened the floor for impressions and suggestions.
19. The Bureau congratulated the Chair on the successful hosting of the third Heads of Delegation meeting. The desirability of having clear prompts in order to prepare prior to the meeting was raised. The Bureau expressed desire for further Heads of Delegation meetings during the next intersessional period. The Bureau thanked the Chair again for the helpful informal setting of the Heads of Delegation meetings.
20. The Chair thanked the Bureau for their feedback and indicated he heard them on the importance of hosting informal Heads of Delegation meetings in the next intersessional period. Agendas for any such meetings would be shared in a timely manner allowing delegations to prepare.

Agenda Item 3: Any other matters.

21. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that Host Country INC-5 Republic of Korea will have an information desk at INC-4. The Bureau may, therefore, wish to take note and relay to their regions that this desk may be consulted for any potential clarifications regarding accommodation and visa.

22. The Bureau discussed the issue of the location of the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries. The Secretariat clarified that the Diplomatic Conference was to be convened by the Executive Director of UNEP in accordance with the mandate set out in paragraph 12 of UNEA Resolution 5/14, and that the Secretariat is currently undertaking an analysis of practices from previous processes.
23. The Chair provided an update on the discussions with regard to the establishment of a legal drafting group at INC-4, including in his consultations during the Head of Delegations meeting and in regional meeting. He would continue his consultations in the course of the week with a view to making a proposal on the matter to the INC.
24. Later in the week, the Chair presented his proposal to the Bureau for further consultation with regions. His proposal included establishment of an open-ended legal drafting group, whose work would commence at INC-5. Members who wish to do so could communicate the of a legal expert from their delegation for participation in the work of the group. The group would conduct a legal review of any elements of the draft text forwarded to it by the INC with a view to ensuring that the text was drafted in a legally sound manner and make recommendations on the wording to the INC for its consideration. In its work, the legal drafting group would not consider policy issues, and any policy issues it might identify in the course of its work would be referred back to the plenary of the Committee. He emphasised that the proposed mandate is for the group to do technical legal review and drafting and not to engage in political negotiations.
25. The Bureau recalled some of the steps taken in advance of INC-4 in order to develop the scope and format of the possible intersessional work, in particular through the three informal meetings of Head of Delegations and the discussions on the importance of intersessional work during pre-sessional regional consultations. In the course of the week during INC-4, the Bureau held discussions on the concept note for intersessional work presented by the Chair and also consulted with the co-chairs of the contact groups appointed by the INC. Following this, the Chair conducted a number of informal consultations and reported on the progress in preparation of the decision on intersessional work to the plenary of the INC on several occasions. The revised draft decision resulting from this process was shared with the Bureau for consultation with the regions, in advance of the closing plenary of the INC.

Agenda Item 4: Next Bureau meeting.

26. The INC Chair indicated that the meeting time of the next Bureau meeting would be shared shortly.

Agenda Item 5: Closing of the meeting.

27. The meeting closed at 14:30pm.