

Plastic Pollution INC-5.2 Highlights: Friday, 8 August 2025

Delegates reconvened for the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) to develop an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. They met in contact and informal groups throughout the day and into the evening, basing their discussions on the [Chair's Text](#) circulated on 1 December 2024, and on proposals prepared by contact group Co-Chairs and delegations' submissions, where possible.

Contact Group 1

Co-chaired by Maria Angélica Ikeda (Brazil) and Axel Borchmann (Germany), the group met in the evening to receive updates from two informal groups and consider what text to forward for the "assembled document" to be presented in the stocktaking plenary.

On **plastic products** (Article 3), New Zealand reported that the informal group had completed discussions on text related to national measures including the criteria therein. They noted that in the next informals, they would discuss reporting and a potential subsidiary body. On **plastic product design** (Article 5), the Netherlands reported that little progress had been made and asked for additional time. One delegation noted that they were unable to participate in informals due to the lack of space in the meeting room. Another delegation noted they hosted an "informal informal" on **[supply][sustainable production]** (Article 6). In response to a concern, Co-Chair Ikeda noted that informal informals are member-driven initiatives.

For the assembled document, the contact group agreed to send the documents reflecting the status of work on Articles 3 and 5, indicating the paragraphs on which work has begun in the informal discussions, along with a footnote to clarify that the text is, *inter alia*, not agreed. The group further agreed to: reflect that the contact group has not begun a line-by-line negotiation on the Chair's Text on Articles 2 (definitions), 4 (exemptions), and 6; and add a placeholder for a possible article on scope.

Contact Group 2

Co-chaired by Peter Justice Dery (Ghana) and Tuulia Toikka (Finland), the group met in the afternoon. Delegates heard a report from the informal informal on **releases and leakages** (Article 7). As Co-Facilitator, the UK presented heavily bracketed, streamlined text for paragraph 1. After an extended huddle, the group agreed to add a footnote explaining that the text: reflects the status of discussions; is not agreed; and does not prejudge the right of any member to propose additions, deletions, or modifications. An informal is scheduled for Saturday, 9 August.

Chile presented a report from informals on **plastic waste management** (Article 8) and requested more time. The group agreed to forward the outcome of their work in the contact group to plenary, noting that their work in the informals is not ready. An informal on the article was held in the evening.

The EU presented a report from informal informals on **existing plastic pollution** (Article 9), noting that they had only briefly commenced their work. The group agreed that they would forward only the outcome of their deliberations in the contact group to plenary. The group further agreed to convene an informal to

continue work on the article on Saturday, 9 August, to be co-facilitated by the EU and the Dominican Republic. Cameroon reported on work in an informal informal on **just transition** (Article 10) and requested more time to continue work. The Co-Facilitator noted an unresolved debate on splitting the provisions into two articles. Co-Chair Dery noted ongoing discussions in the Bureau on the question of additional articles. The group agreed to forward only the outcome of their deliberations in the contact group to plenary.

Contact Group 3

This group, co-chaired by Kate Lynch (Australia) and Gwen Sisor (Palau), met in the afternoon. On **capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer, including international cooperation** (Article 12), delegates debated on how to refer to recipients, with some preferring a list of stakeholders and others favoring a general reference. Some delegates preferred, while other opposed, distinguishing between Indigenous Peoples and local communities to strengthen the rights and participation of Indigenous Peoples. One delegation called to delete mention of local communities, and another delegate proposed entirely deleting the reference to Indigenous Peoples.

Many delegates opposed deleting reference to "triangular cooperation," emphasizing that this provides more avenues for international cooperation. One delegate stressed the need to include cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), particularly those in the chemicals and waste cluster, which was opposed by others, who deemed this preemptive and too specific. Regarding freedom of trade and technology transfer in implementing the ILBI, many delegations suggested discussing this in relation to trade, in Contact Group 4. Others disagreed, opining that trade and technology transfer is interlinked, and should be addressed within this article.

One delegate presented their proposal for an international cooperation mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the ILBI and provide a platform within the agreement that is focused on capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer.

For the assembled text, Co-Chair Sisor proposed sending paragraphs discussed in brackets, with a footnote that a Co-Chairs' text, which is yet to be discussed, is available; and the paragraphs yet to be discussed, with a caveat that this reflects proposals previously made. On the way forward, Co-Chair Sisor proposed that the contact group continue discussions on the remaining paragraphs.

On **financial [resources and] mechanism** (Article 11), Co-Chair Lynch introduced a simplified Co-Chairs' text, as mandated by delegates, noting that it reflects the main positions that have been shared. She suggested, and delegates unanimously agreed, to use this as the basis for line-by-line negotiations. One delegation proposed "parking" all contentious elements in the first reading. Some delegations called to reinsert text related to the importance of an "open and supportive international system."

For the assembled document, Co-Chair Lynch noted that the Co-Chairs' text would be conveyed, in square brackets, to the stocktaking plenary, and noted that she would request more time for line-by-line negotiations. She suggested establishing informals to address contentious issues, including the details of the financial mechanism.

Contact Group 4

This group, co-chaired by Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Go Kobayashi (Japan), met in the morning and evening. On **implementation and compliance** (Article 13), delegates resumed discussions on the proposed implementation and compliance committee (ICC), with some supporting that its composition be discussed at the first Conference of the Parties (COP 1). One favored a 17-member ICC with seats for small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs), with another supporting a 15-member Committee with geographical representation.

On **national plans** (Article 14), several delegations supported mandatory, legally binding national plans, with one regional group preferring that these be voluntary. One regional group noted linkages between this article and articles on reporting and effectiveness evaluation. They supported, among others, the submission of national (action) plans every two years, displaying an increasing level of ambition, and called for recognizing the specific needs of SIDS and LDCs.

One delegation presented a proposal supported by 47 countries, seeking to align the new treaty with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by, among others, adding “national stakeholder and partners” to facilitate the development, implementation, and updating of national plans. Several underlined the importance of harmonizing language on Indigenous Peoples and local communities throughout the treaty text, with many also supporting including the knowledges, sciences, and practices of Indigenous Peoples in national plans.

One delegation suggested alternative text to ensure developing countries receive financial assistance to implement their national plans. Others preferred providing means of implementation (MoI) for all parties. Another suggested using language on national plans under the Minamata Convention on Mercury and noted that the details of these plans could be discussed at the first or second COP. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

On **reporting** (Article 15), one regional group, supported by several delegations, suggested linking Articles 14 and 15. This was opposed by others. Another regional group called for COP 1 to agree on the periodicity of reporting. Many delegations supported MoI for reporting, with some singling out SIDS and LDCs in this regard. Other delegations opposed linking reporting to MoI. One delegation proposed staggered reporting timelines for developed and developing countries, modeled after the Minamata Convention. Others opposed bifurcated reporting timelines. One delegation proposed that parties report on challenges in implementation. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

Regarding **effectiveness evaluation** (Article 16), one group proposed that the first evaluation should be undertaken no later than six years after the entry into force of the ILBI and every six years afterward, while other delegations proposed three-, four-, and five-year intervals. Others proposed, among others, that the evaluation: not be used to impose new obligations or alter the existing objective, obligations, and scope of the ILBI; be conducted based on information on the extent to which developed countries have provided support pursuant to Articles 11 and 12; be limited to effectiveness, not implementation; assess the adequacy of obligations; and rely on data, information, and indicators across the entire plastics lifecycle. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

On **information exchange** (Article 17), one group called to focus the article on plastic waste management. Other proposals included adding text to address: the need to identify sources of plastic pollution and human and ecological exposure to plastic pollution; that access to, use, and sharing of traditional knowledge and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities shall respect national legislation protecting collective intellectual rights and procedures for the free, prior, and informed consent of knowledge holders; and that information on the health and safety of humans and the environment shall not be regarded as confidential. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

Regarding **public information, awareness, education and research** (Article 18), one delegation requested including text stating that nothing under the ILBI shall require the sharing of information protected from disclosure under national law. Several delegations supported the advancement of scientific and technological research, development, innovation, and cooperation

to be mandatory. Several others called for replacing “knowledge of Indigenous Peoples” with “knowledges, sciences, and practices of Indigenous Peoples” and “local community knowledge” with “local knowledge systems.” Other proposals included taking measures to enable businesses to share information and report on how their activities align with the objectives of the ILBI and referencing local and subnational governments. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

Delegates turned to the **preamble** and interlinkages with a new article developed in informals on **principles [and approaches]** (Article 1bis). One regional group stressed that human and Indigenous Peoples rights would need to be addressed both in the preamble and in the operative article on principles. A few countries called to reference UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/14 in the preamble, with one noting that doing so may also address the issue of scope. Other delegations opposed reference to the plastic(s) lifecycle. Other proposals included that the preamble reference: human rights; human, environmental, and animal health; synergies among MEAs; and the responsibilities of businesses. Delegates continued discussions in an informal.

Delegates heard reports back from the informals on the **conference of the parties** (Article 20), with the Co-Facilitator noting progress made and requesting further time for discussions.

On **health** (Article 19), Brazil, as informal group Co-Facilitator, explained that on-screen editing proved difficult and required the Co-Chairs to prepare a conceptual table comparing the different proposals. Two delegates lamented the lack of consideration of one group’s proposal in the informals and requested the appointment of an additional Co-Facilitator. The Co-Chairs proposed, and delegates agreed, to prepare a streamlined text, including a zero option, and a caption for all the different proposals. The EU, as Co-Facilitator of the informal group on **subsidiary bodies** (Article 20bis), reported that the article was entirely bracketed, but the work is still in progress.

One delegation, supported by some and opposed by others, requested to establish an informal group on the proposed new Article 23bis on the relationship with other agreements.

In the Corridors

As delegates rushed to complete consideration of all articles, populating them with numerous proposals, some were left with a sense of déjà vu from negotiations in Nairobi, Ottawa, and Busan. “The text has become unreadable again,” sighed one delegate, concerned that the exercise of populating articles with a “wish list” was not helpful in moving toward compromise. Others, however, felt encouraged by a new Co-Chairs’ text on finance, with the group showering the Co-Chairs with praise for “clearly understanding the assignment.”

Elsewhere, one Co-Chair expressed deep concern that “we are going back to a Christmas tree,” “begging” delegates dozens of times to forward the text to plenary, stressing, “We need to take action now; we need to show a little progress.” “If we are to finish at all, what we need is crystal clear guidance on the negotiating modalities for next week,” shared one delegate.

Observers also worried about the lack of progress as they awaited the assembled document to be presented on Saturday, lamenting, “this plastics crisis is costing us not just money (with estimates of about USD 1.5 trillion worldwide), but also our lives at every stage.” Although some countries argue that more science is needed to definitively prove the effects of plastic, many countries emphasize that human and environmental health concerns are central to the treaty. In this regard, several delegations underlined that information on human and environmental health and safety is a “public good that cannot be withheld” on supposed grounds of confidentiality.

With time running out at INC 5.2, and tensions rising, whispers were overheard about whether plastics might be better tackled in other fora, as some grew despondent about the prospect of a global multilateral response. Louder calls, however, came from those who reiterated, throughout the day, that only a global response can be effective. At this stage in the negotiations, a herculean push is needed to make meaningful progress. While Ministers are expected to join delegates in Geneva next week, “political will alone may not suffice.”