

Plastic Pollution INC-5.2 Highlights: Monday, 11 August 2025

Delegates convened 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 late into the night, basing their discussions on the “[Assembled Text](#)” of the ILBI, where necessary, or using the status of work documents prepared by the contact groups Co-Chairs.

During the day, several delegations held closed-door consultations with INC Chair Luis Vayas.

Contact Group 1

Co-chaired by Maria Angélica Ikeda (Brazil) and Axel Borchmann (Germany), this group met during the day in informal discussions on **plastic products** (Article 3) and on **plastic product design** (Article 5). They convened in a night session to hear reports on informal discussions and engaged in heated debates on if and when to have informal informal discussions on **scope** and on **[supply] [sustainable production]** (Article 6). Both of these discussions will be held on Tuesday, 12 August.

Contact Group 2

Co-chaired by Peter Justice Dery (Ghana) and Tuulia Toikka (Finland), the group met in the evening to hear reports from informals.

On **releases and leakages** (Article 7), Kenya, as Co-Facilitator, shared that the group was able to consider textual edits to paragraphs 2-4. They requested another informal to address the remaining brackets. One delegation lamented that they were unable to engage in discussions on paragraph 1 and proposed an informal informal. The group will meet again on Tuesday, 12 August.

On **plastic waste management** (Article 8), Switzerland, as Co-Facilitator, reported that delegates were able to share general views on paragraphs 3 and 4, which the Co-Facilitators integrated into a streamlined version of the text. They also requested another informal. One delegation requested an informal informal, arguing that there was no consensus on the current text. The group will meet again on Tuesday, 12 August.

On **[[existing][and][legacy] plastic [waste] pollution [remediation of plastic pollution]** (Article 9), Belgium, as Co-Facilitator, explained that the group had converged on the

need for: plastic pollution to be addressed in a standalone article; different approaches for areas within and beyond national jurisdiction; alignment with existing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and identifying zones with plastic pollution. Areas of divergence included the scope and origins of plastic pollution covered by the article. Dominican Republic, as Co-Facilitator, added that progress was made to clean up paragraph 1a and requested another informal. The group will meet again on Tuesday, 12 August.

Regarding **[just] transition[[s] [for workers]]** (Article 10), Cameroon, as Co-Facilitator, highlighted that two delegations had opposed a standalone article. Areas of convergence included: referencing those disproportionately impacted, including waste pickers; recognizing that just transition also brings opportunities and needs to account for national circumstances; and addressing means of implementation in the context of Articles 11 and 12. Areas of divergence included whether to: reference subsidiary bodies; make the articles obligations mandatory; and mention reporting. Several delegates also asked for the conference of the parties (COP) to provide guidance on just transition. The Co-Facilitators requested that informal informals continue on the article.

Contact Group 3

Co-chaired by Kate Lynch (Australia) and Gwen Sisor (Palau), this group met in the afternoon and night. Regarding **financial [resources and] mechanism** (Article 11), Co-Chair Sisor presented the status of work as of Sunday, 10 August, which contains a Co-Chairs’ iteration of the first seven paragraphs of the article, based on the textual negotiations of members as of Saturday, 9 August. The contact group heard a report from Austria and Costa Rica, Co-Facilitators of the informal group, who noted that their discussions focused on the options for the structure of the financial mechanism, with the understanding that the options are not mutually exclusive and that all are still on the table. They asked for more time to continue discussions.

Delegates turned to **[international cooperation] [cooperation in] capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer [, including international cooperation]** (Article 12), with a number of delegations lamenting that the article had not received equal and due consideration. The group heard a bridging proposal on the establishment of a mechanism for international cooperation, under the authority of the COP, to facilitate the implementation of the ILBI by supporting developing countries,

including through initiatives of governmental, non-governmental, and private entities. The proposal further details that COP 1 will develop the terms of reference and governance modalities of the mechanism, and that the mechanism is to be transparent, inclusive, cost-effective, country-driven, efficient, and oriented to avoid the creation of additional layers in accessing the requisite cooperation.

Several developing countries indicated their support for the proposal, stressing the need for an entity to channel cooperation and to complement an ambitious text with “ambitious measures,” with one delegation drawing attention to similar entities under other MEAs, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. Proposals on this text included: specifying in the title that it is a “mechanism for international cooperation on capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer;” replacing the list of entities with “a variety of stakeholders;” and specifying that the mechanism must be accessible.

A number of developed country delegations noted reservations, highlighting, among others, the future secretariat’s ability to support cooperation activities without the need for a dedicated mechanism, and the proposed mechanism’s administrative and budgetary burden for the secretariat. One delegate proposed that a future COP can develop such a cooperation mechanism, if needed.

With regard to both articles, a few delegations asked for a change in a footnote, requesting the addition of a reference that the text is without prejudice to cross-cutting discussions related to references to donor and recipient countries. Some delegations supported that streamlining this language across the treaty text would be done later in the meeting. Others opposed, cautioning that this modality was not agreed to by all delegates. Co-Chair Sisior noted that this will be reflected in the summary of the status of work. The group continued discussions in a night session.

Contact Group 4

Co-chaired by Go Kobayashi (Japan) and Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda), the contact group met briefly in the morning to hear a report on informal discussions on **health** (Article 19). Reporting that the informal group had successfully completed a second reading of the article, the Co-Facilitator from Uganda noted that they had reviewed the consolidated text, but that divergence remained on whether to include the article at all or whether certain elements could be addressed under **public information, awareness, education and research** (Article 18). They requested more time to refine the article but also acknowledged that some progress depends on ongoing work under other articles.

Co-Chair Kobayashi then announced that the contact group would meet in informals at various points in the day, basing their discussions on the status of work document from Sunday, 10 August. The informals addressed: the **preamble and principles [and approaches]** (Article 1bis), co-facilitated by Saudi Arabia and Colombia; **relationship with other agreements** (Article 23bis), facilitated by Brazil; and **national [action] plans** (Article 14), **reporting** (Article 15), and **effectiveness evaluation** (Article 16), facilitated by Palau.

In the Corridors

Back behind closed doors for part of the day, there were whispered conversations about progress and impasses in equal measure. The scheduled informal group reports shed only a limited amount of light on the state of play, and delegates may have to wait for the next plenary to get a full picture of how the negotiations are going.

With delegates going back and forth between different informals and contact groups throughout the day, several voiced concern at the perceived “lack of organization.” “I feel like a clown in a circus, being rushed from one room to the next,” panted one delegate, dashing into a contact group that ended up being postponed at the last minute. “We need some structure to this,” said one delegation, while others opined, “these stops and starts mean we’re losing momentum – just as we’re getting into the nitty gritty, we’re having to leap into contact groups to ask for more time.”

Yet others felt that reconvening in the contact group settings was necessary to make sure that discussions remain focused and that all members are kept abreast with all the informal discussions occurring. Some delegates went further, querying the mandates and prioritization of issues being addressed. “In the end, we’re going to have to address everything, so let’s just stick to the schedule,” said one exasperated delegate. “Is there another way of doing this?” wondered another. “We could limit updates on ongoing discussions to once a day in the morning – it might save us some crucial time.”

Substantively, things didn’t seem to be much better either, with “no downward shift in the number of brackets since Saturday.” “Is it time to park some issues?” This was the question on some delegations’ lips in some of the informals, with three days of formal negotiation time left. Some of these issues reflect areas where “we have irreconcilable differences,” confided another, further sharing that, “mentioning plastic production at this point may not get us very far.” A seasoned delegate shared that, “it’s perhaps *how* we include language on plastic production,” that could be the difference between progress and a stalemate.

Whether or not to include production is an issue directly related to the scope of the ILBI. “It’s difficult to believe this is still TBC, with less than a week left of negotiating time,” sighed one delegate. Others were hopeful that the “shuttle diplomacy” called for by some delegates in Saturday’s plenary “will soon shed light on this issue.” In this regard, a large group of countries representing different interests is said to have organized a meeting with the INC Chair, in hopes of finding a way forward on “the issues where we are stuck.”

Without a resolution on the scope in sight, tensions began to rise among the exhausted delegates. In one informal discussion, the talks were temporarily suspended as some delegations called for a harmonization of talks in other rooms. “We cannot continue discussions on means of implementation if some delegations are not prepared to discuss plastic production.” “Has the horse-trading finally begun?” wondered one delegate, excited by the late-night drama, “but it’s all part of the game.” Others were less impressed, noting, “we will not be arm-twisted into acquiescing.” “It’s only the first day of the week,” quipped one delegate, remaining optimistic, despite it all, “we can still make it on time.”