

Meeting of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics
Monday 26 October 2020, 15:30 to 17:00 (GMT+3)
Virtual meeting

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda and background documentation is available on the [meeting portal](#).

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. The Acting Chair opened the meeting.
2. The agenda was adopted without any changes.

Agenda item 2: Preparations for the fourth meeting of the Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics

a) Results of the virtual preparatory meetings

3. Following a presentation from the Secretariat, Bureau members were invited to reflect on the outcome from the second informal virtual preparatory meeting held 20-22 October.
4. Members of the Bureau expressed appreciation to the Acting Chair and to the Secretariat for successfully organizing the virtual preparatory meeting and noted that it provided a good opportunity for experts to engage in an interactive discussion on key works streams under the expert group and on the preparation on the draft Chair's summary based on the draft outline.
5. Members also noted differing views from members of the expert group with regard to the usefulness to summarise potential response options and make recommendations for further work as an outcome of the expert group, and confirmed that while efforts should be made to achieve as broad consensus as possible on the content of the Chair's summary, the virtual format of the meeting will not be conducive for a negotiated outcome. It was also noted that some experts was of the view that the findings from the Secretariat-led effectiveness analysis should not be considered as final but should be defined by ad hoc expert group itself.
6. The Acting Chair noted that requests had been made to present relevant progress reports at AHEG-4 had from Japan, UK, Norway, Canada and the World Wildlife Fund during the second virtual preparatory meeting, and suggested to allow for succinct 5 minute presentations for each request.
7. The Acting Chair requested the Secretariat to remind the participants to register early, connect to the meeting platform well in advance of the start of the meeting, and submit statements in writing in advance of the meeting, e.g. to facilitate online interpretation.

b) Logistical and practical preparations for AHEG-4

8. The Secretariat presented lessons learnt from the virtual preparatory meeting from technical aspect and provided an update on the number of registrations for AHEG-4 so far, per UN region.

9. Members of the Bureau underlined the need to promote active engagement by additional member State experts at AHEG-4 and requested the Secretariat to assist the Bureau members including through the UNEP regional offices and regional seas programmes.
10. Members raised the challenge of language barriers when reaching out to experts in the region, and requested support from the Secretariat where possible. It was noted that Members of the Bureau may wish to engage with other experts in the region to facilitate multilingual communication.
11. Following a question from a Member of the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that the Members of the Bureau has been elected for the full duration of AHEG-4, and that the agenda item concerning election was solely dedicated to formally elect the Chair for the meeting, following the resignation of the previous Chair from New Zealand.

c) Draft summary for the AHEG

12. The Acting Chair referred to a number of comments received in writing on the outline of the draft summary and requested the Secretariat to upload the comments on the virtual preparatory meeting website¹.
13. The Bureau agreed that a full draft of the summary prepared by the Acting Chair with support from the Secretariat should be shared with Bureau members for further consultations by Wednesday 28 October, and shared with members of the expert group by Monday 2 November, to allow for sufficient time for experts to review the draft in time for AHEG-4.
14. Following a question from a Member of the Bureau Member, the Secretariat confirmed that it will be up to the meeting to define the content and status of the Chair's Summary at the final day of the meeting, including with regard to possible recommendations.
15. The Bureau reconfirmed that no formal negotiations or voting are foreseen to take place during AHEG-4, and noted that if the meeting were to aim to adopt concrete recommendations in accordance with rule 63 of the UNEA Rules of Procedure, an amendment to the draft meeting agenda may be required. The Acting Chair underlined the importance of focussing on substantive rather than procedural matters, with a view to fulfil the mandate of the expert group as outlined in UNEA Resolutions 4/6 and 3/7.

Agenda item 3: Any other matters.

16. The Bureau decided that the next meeting of the Bureau should take place on 6 November, and that the Bureau would meet daily during the week of the AHEG-4, as necessary.

Agenda item 4: Closing of the Meeting.

17. The Acting Chair thanked the Bureau and the Secretariat for an informative and productive discussion and declared the meeting closed.

¹ <https://environmentassembly.unenvironment.org/virtual-preparatory-meetings#second>