

**Draft Statement on behalf of WHO including the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

**Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment**

**Punta del Este, Uruguay, 28 November to 2 December 2022**

WHO and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, an entity hosted by WHO, welcome the opportunity to make a statement to inform the discussions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC1) for the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

The WHO Constitution tasks WHO with, among other things, serving as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work and maintaining effective collaboration with the United Nations and specialized agencies, with the objective of attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.

The INC's mandate intersects with WHO's work across different programmatic areas such as:

- chemical risk assessment and regulation, including of chemicals of concern and endocrine disrupting chemicals;
- air pollution, particularly from the open burning of plastic in unsound waste management practices and during the stripping and recycling of e-waste;
- food safety, including plastics in food packaging and contamination of food by microplastics;
- water sanitation and hygiene, including plastics, nano and microplastics in the water cycle and contamination of drinking water;
- access to essential medicines and medical devices; and
- tobacco control, including plastics in cigarette filters and nicotine delivery products.

WHO recognizes that plastics play an important role in healthcare, also that the health sector can and should do more to reduce plastic pollution and encourage sustainable consumption, and that doing so will promote and protect both human health and the environment, contributing to sustainable development.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of Article 19 of the WHO Constitution, recognizes the interlinkages with environmental issues in addressing health concerns.

WHO recommends that any legally binding instrument on plastic pollution recognize:

1. Protecting human health to be an essential element of any sustainable approach to address plastic pollution
2. The need to consider health in all policies:
  - a. To maximize the benefits to human health;
  - b. To prevent and minimize risks to, and adverse impacts on, human health; and
  - c. To promote and prioritize issues which provide co-benefits to both health and the environment.

3. That scientific knowledge will continue to develop over time concerning the health risks associated with plastics, their production, use and disposal.
4. The need for approaches to addressing plastic pollution to be modified as scientific knowledge of risk develops.

WHO and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control look forward to a fruitful and productive negotiation and stand ready to contribute as necessary.