



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia written submissions on the potential options for elements towards an international legally binding instrument

Name of country (for Members of the committee)	Saudi Arabia
Name of organization (for observers to the committee)	Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
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I. Substantive elements

1. Objective(s)

a) *What objective(s) could be set out in the instrument?*

Proposed Objective:

Vision:

Establish a new instrument for eliminating plastic pollution in a sustainable manner. The treaty should address more effective waste management, adapting circularity, advanced recycling technologies, and empowering vulnerable societies that could be affected by this instrument.

Objectives:

- Decision-making should be purely based on scientific and socioeconomic facts to ensure sustainable outcomes.
- To recognize the importance of plastics for sustainable development and the need to focus on addressing pollution through – adoption of circular approaches anchored on the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle for the post-consumer plastics.
- Encourage research and innovation to reduce waste generation through the full cycle from the design of product phase, use, and recycling phase. In addition, the use of novel plastic additives that has less toxicity to the environment and humans. To eliminate the leakage or disposal of post-consumer plastics in the environment
- The objective should aim to reduce additional plastic pollution in the environment and marine plastic litter based on national plans taking national circumstances and capabilities in consideration, through a life-cycle approach that includes reducing the discharge of mismanaged plastic litter by improved waste management infrastructure and innovative solutions while recognizing the critical role of plastics for society
- Consider national circumstances and capabilities while encouraging cross-parties collaboration and knowledge sharing to facilitate desirable outcomes

Explanatory Text:

Saudi Arabia’s is supporting a development of an instrument that promotes plastic waste reduction, elimination of plastic pollution to the environment including marine environment. The instrument needs to be fair and inclusive.

The leakage of plastic and plastic wastes into the environment can occur from a variety of land-based and ocean-based sources, and mainly from mismanagement of plastic waste. The sources include, but are not limited to illegal traffic, historical dumping of plastic waste to the developing countries, the uncontrolled dumping of waste, and litter.

A Recent research¹ provided evidence that higher recycling rates of post-consumer plastics are achievable with the right business model, product design, consumer sensitization, technology deployment and high value circular flow (e.g., reuse, redistribute, refurbished, remanufacture, and recycling and regulatory support) with almost 80% recycling rate reported in some countries (Figure 1.).

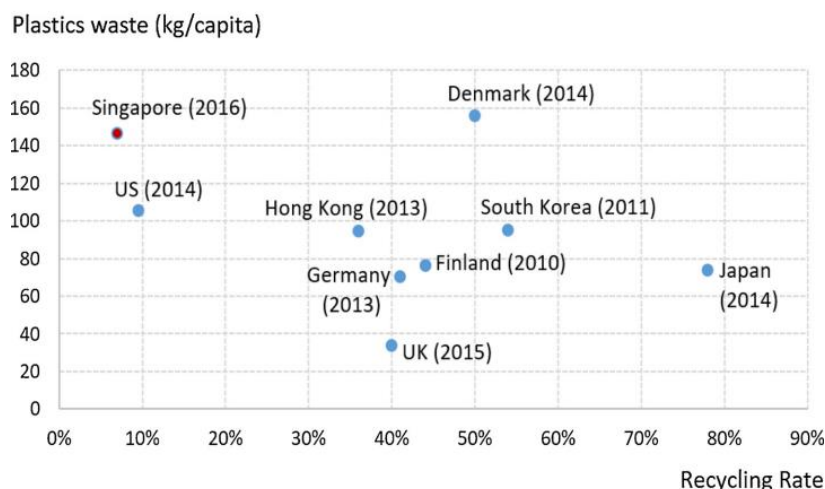


Figure 1: Plastic waste generation and recycling rates.

This vision requires a major transformation from a linear to a circular model to reduce plastic waste, use non-toxic additives, and enhance products for recyclability to maximize their value and protect our environment. Promoting innovation, and sustainable business towards a circular approach for the good of people and the planet. This objective shall drive the change needed to convert to a circular global society, including closing the loop on used plastic.

¹ Hsien H. Khoo, LCA of plastic waste recovery into recycled materials, energy and fuels in Singapore, Resources, Conservation and Recycling, Volume 145, 2019, Pages 67-77, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2019.02.010>.

For this – elimination of plastic waste to work, civil society, consumers, retailers, recyclers and manufacturers must all come together to enable valuable materials to be collected and included in CE

2. Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches

a) *What core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches would provide a comprehensive approach to addressing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, throughout the full life cycle in line with the future objective(s) of the instrument?*

Core obligations:

1. Design for circularity: it is strategic for a circular approach for future plastics to concentrate efforts on a few safe, appropriate polymers that can provide a wide variety of utility. This may mean providing engineering departments with circularity requirements for components as well as how easily the whole product can be disassembled at end of use.
2. *Agree on exchange of best practices in recycling between nations & support knowledge transfer*

Control Measures:

1. Open communication channels: among parties of the treaty and the instrument must be established, to aid in the communication of nationally determined action plans without any standardization or harmonization to the elements in these communications, or in the plans themselves as all of this should be nationally determined, based on a bottom-up approach, aligning with each country's national strategy, and addressing the pollution within each country's geographical boundaries.
2. Advanced recycling technologies: A wide variety of technologies are underway to take plastics back down to their chemistry to fabricate new materials. Recent advances in compostable polymers provide a promising “biochemical recycling” pathway. Emerging efforts in “chemical recycling” (depolymerization, solvolysis, purification, etc.) also show progress. Like mechanical recycling, concentration and flow of like materials provides much better efficiency with higher mass and energy balances.
3. Driving Investments: through driving technology growth, advanced recycling and materials recovery methodologies and commitments in the whole value chain on waste collection, sorting, and conversion.
4. Life cycle assessment (LCA): including social, environmental and economic impacts across all life cycle stages when making decision, considering into account concepts combined with life cycle tools that enables science- based evidence

Voluntary approaches:

Implementation elements

1. Implementation measures

- a) *How to ensure implementation of the instrument at the national level (eg. role national action plans contribute to meeting the objectives and obligations of the instrument?)*
- b) *How to ensure effectiveness of the instrument and have efficient national reporting?*
- c) *Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here on implementation measures (for example for scientific and technical cooperation and coordination as well as compliance).*

Implementation measures are an important element to ensure progress and actual implementation of

A. How to ensure implementation of the instrument at the national level

- Any tool and reporting method have to be nationally determined. Best practices sharing is encouraged, similar to the BRS convention.
- There is no one size and no common standards that fit all as individual countries. economic circumstance and available infrastructure defer significantly.
- Key aspect is taking into account flexibility for developing country members.
- Reporting and monitoring must not burden countries, particularly developing countries, and should not affect their right to develop their economies.
- Countries can build their reporting on national action plans and strategies.
- Having acknowledged plastic pollution as challenge, reporting instruments are to focus on pollution originated mainly from mismanagement of waste aspect and strengthening those elements.
- A designed mechanism on plastic waste monitoring, reporting and verification would support policy makers to further measure impacts of implemented targets and policies.

B. How to ensure the effectiveness of the instrument

- Building on best practices and drawing on the experiences in reporting with other conventions such as BRS, which focus on achievements and the challenges.
- Also learning from other agreements, there is an important aspect to protect developing countries, new amendments adopted in other conventions impact plastic waste that is difficult-to-recycle, ensuring a need to receive clear consent before being imported into receiving countries in accordance to Basel Convention which could be an area where some amendment can be made under Basel Convention, this is an important step in the right direction, but still allows developed countries to dump difficult-to-recycle plastic waste in developing countries, where there is often not the infrastructure and capacity to appropriately manage it. The instrument should not take over the function of other agreements and conventions such as Basel, but can recommend emendates to the others
- Ensuring no prejudgment of any discussions, there has to be a comprehensive discussion on all aspects

C. On other relevant proposals

- Means of implementation will be the main driver for success

- Countries can report the progress they are achieving on an individual using the format of reporting they select. Reporting approaches can be exchanged as part of best practices

2. Means of Implementation

With respect to means of implementation, document UNEP/PP/INC.1/5 covers the following elements: capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and financial assistance.

a) *What measures will be required to support the implementation of the instrument?*

Intro:

General principles must be followed for the future implementation of the treaty. 1) Developed countries shall recognize the importance of integrated and holistic approaches when providing means of implementation, 2) developing countries should not carry the burden of means of implementation and their required needs by themselves. 3) Means of implementation shall address the concerns of developing countries on the impacts of the implementation of response measures 4) Developing countries shall be enabled to communicate their required needs for effective implementation of the future treaty. 5) Means of implementation shall be treated equally and in parallel with control measures.

Means of implementation will require the following elements:

Financial Support

- The future treaty shall always provide financial support in the context of sustainable development.
- Financial support flows shall be provided from developed to developing countries.
- In providing support, it is of utmost importance not to condition such support, which further adds burden on developing countries.
- For the effective and faster implementation of the treaty, working with existing multilateral financial bodies is beneficial
- Increase investment in the required infrastructure for plastic waste management and build an integrated waste management infrastructure that is linked to recycling, with increased disclosure and transparency. This involves identified investment opportunities in waste management across the entire value chain supported.

Capacity building

- Shall be centered on providing the necessary capacities for developing countries to implement the future treaty
- For any effective implementation of policy, assessing, addressing, and understanding the socio-economic impacts of the implementation of response measures is an essential need

for developing countries. For example, ex-ante and post-ante assessment of national and international policies on domestic economies

- Capacity-building modalities shall recognize regional and required needs.
- Enhance waste management capabilities, especially in collection and sorting, treatment, and disposal in environmentally sound manner.
- Increase capacity in the Effective planning and investment in the supply chain to cope with the changes and modifications needed to realize circular approaches in materials and emissions.
- Sharing experiences and best practices from other conventions on capacity building and technology transfer relating to the conventions' implementation.

Technology Transfer

- Promote technology growth, with advanced reusing and recycling and materials recovery and disposable methodologies, and commitments to help drive investment in the whole value chain on waste collection, sorting, and conversion.
- Mechanism is needed to transfer advanced technology from developed to developing countries.
- Support research and development and investigate sustainable technical solutions within the value chain for production and identifying key gaps in scientific research.

II. Additional input

Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here (for example introductory elements; awareness-raising, education, and exchange of information; research; stakeholder engagement; institutional arrangements and final provisions).

It is imperative for a legally binding treaty such as the INC to have an instrument that creates a factual basis to understand better the role plastics play across multiple sectors ensuring that the actions stated in the agreement result in the betterment of the environmental and economic circumstances of the most impacted areas of the world. The multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) provides a venue for deeper discussion. It must include experts such as scientists from all relevant disciplines such as engineers, researchers, manufacturers, and businesses with diverse backgrounds (geographic, cultural, socio-economic etc.)

This instrument should not dive into the scope of existing treaties or instrument that have been approved under the UN, if negotiating parties identify gaps in other treaties, than a recommendation will be made to amend the existing treaties and not include in the instrument

As for the timeline of the next MSD, we propose to be held before INC-2 to allow parties to position their inputs better and provide feedback to the secretariat on the most inclusive and holistic approach for a legally binding instrument that they anticipate.