

H.E. Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso
Chair of the INC

Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp
Executive Secretary of the INC Secretariat

UN Environment Programme
P.O. Box 30552, 00100
Nairobi, Kenya.

Ottawa, 28th April, 2024

Call for scientific and technical expertise to support intersessional work between INC-4 and INC-5

Dear Ambassador Vayas Valdivieso, dear Executive Secretary Mathur-Filipp,

The Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty would like to congratulate the INC Chair, the INC Secretary, and their teams here in Ottawa for all their hard work and achievements during INC-4 thus far. We are thankful for your joint efforts to ensure inclusion of observers in the process and to make this negotiation space a safer environment for all participants.

We are also thankful for the INC Chair's ambition to establish much needed intersessional work between now and INC-5. In that regard, and in line with well-established practices in UNEP and other UN processes, we would like to stress the need for participation of independent observers, who are free of conflicts of interest, in this final stretch of negotiations of the International Legally Binding Instrument to End Plastic Pollution.

The need for scientific input in the negotiations is evident from our many interactions with delegates from all corners of the world during INC-1, INC-2, INC-3 and INC-4, as well as all the requests we receive from delegates and other stakeholders in the periods between INC sessions. Here in Ottawa, delegates have kept our 60 scientist members on the ground very busy with questions related to everything from hazardous chemicals used in different kinds of plastics and health effects linked to exposure to safe and sustainable plastics removal technologies and remediation. Every morning, to respond to meeting requests and enquiries for scientific background information from INC-4 delegations, we have put together teams of scientists with different backgrounds, expertise, and language skills, to meet with delegations to comprehensively respond to their scientific needs.

We have taken note of the requests from multiple Member States' for scientifically robust information to deliver a legally binding instrument that lives up to the ambitions of UNEA Resolution 5.14. We therefore hope and trust the INC Chair and INC Secretariat, together with the Member States, will ensure full and meaningful participation of independent observers contributing scientific, socioeconomic, and technical advice in any intersessional work leading up to, and beyond, INC-5.

These scientific and technical experts should be inclusive of independent scientists, indigenous knowledge systems and local knowledge holders including representatives of Indigenous Peoples, local communities including frontline and fenceline communities, waste pickers and other workers in informal and cooperative settings, Women, Children and Youth, Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Authorities, Workers and Trade Unions as well as Business and Industry.

We would like to underline the need for the negotiations to build upon independent science. We therefore recommend developing Terms of Reference that are inclusive, calling for cross-regional and full participation from independent scientists across a broad range of disciplines. These Terms of Reference must ensure representation by independent experts who are free of conflicts of interest, including with chemicals and plastics industries.

In that regard, we refer to recommendations from the International Panel on Chemical Pollution, which considers "past or present employment by or consulting for the chemical or plastics industry and related organizations constitutes a Conflict of Interest". It is our view that experts with a Conflict of Interest should not participate in the core work of the inter-sessional working groups nor the science-policy interface expected to be established under the legally binding instrument.

Excellencies, we assure you of our continued dedication to providing independent scientifically robust science as a basis for the legally binding instrument under development and remain available should you seek any advice in this regard.

Sincerely, the coordination team of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty



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